PURPOSE IN TEACHING RELIGION

GEORGE WALTER FISKE

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JESUS' IDEALS OF LIVING

PURPOSE IN TEACHING RELIGION

By
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Professor of Religious Education
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INTRODUCTORY

TEACHERS of religion know what to do far better than *why they are doing it.* There is no more earnest and devoted group in all the world than the people who are trying to share their own loyalty to Christ with a class of boys or girls. Yet they often show greater earnestness than intelligent purpose. The same is true of leaders and supervisors. Church-school administration halts for lack of definite ideals of progress and clear vision of betterment, and the chariot ruts get very deep.

When the author began teaching religious education, the worth-while books on the subject could find ample room on Doctor Eliot's famous five-foot shelf, and leave space to let for volumes in the adjacent fields of education and religion. Now books on this popular subject are coming from the press in shoals, from general publishers as well as church publishers. However, the bulk of this interesting literature is devoted to the discussion of methods and details of organization. A book on principles of religious education is still exceptionally rare. There has been too little discussion of the philosophy of method and the influence of modern educational theory upon our church-school practice.

The present book, it is modestly hoped, may meet this need. It is a study of the aims and objectives of religious education, evolved through Christian history under stress of changing religious ideals and educational theories. This is followed, in the

second part, by the analysis of current methods in the light of the educational principles developed in the earlier chapters. Its constant stress on *purpose* should help teachers of religion to understand better what they are attempting to do in promoting the modern program of religious education.

Are you a teacher who feels the greater difficulty of teaching religion since public schools became so interesting and efficient? It is hoped that this book may explain your difficulty and give you a new joy in mastering it.

Are you a minister whose training is still modern *except* in religious education? Perhaps this study of the aims of the modern educational movement in the church may make clearer to you its strategic importance to the church of the future as well as to our whole civilization.

Are you a busy layman, drafted for service on your church committee of religious education, and wondering what this confusing program of graded courses and varied activities is driving at? The author hopes to help you to see the underlying purpose in this program and increase your enthusiasm and intelligent co-operation in it.

Are you a public-school supervisor or teacher, sincerely troubled by the national problem of character education? It is hoped that you may find here a fresh appraisal of the educational worth of the church, and a challenge to work out a plan for local team-work between church and school.

Are you a director of religious education, experimenting in the fascinating task of teaching religion? It is hoped some clearer insights may be found herein, which may give you a surer sense of pur-

pose and a steadier conviction of the high worthwhileness of your comradeship with the Master Teacher in the ministry to children and youth.

The author wishes to acknowledge his obligation to the writers and publishers of the books in the following list, and to thank the publishers for their written permission to quote, *in loco*, shorter or longer excerpts from these volumes:

The Abingdon Press: Betts, *The New Program of Religious Education.*

Betts, *The Curriculum of Religious Education.*

Betts-Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion.*

Fiske, *Jesus' Ideals of Living.*

Edland, *Principles and Technique in Religious Dramatics*

Association Press: Horne, *Jesus the Master Teacher.*

Watson, *Case Studies for Teachers of Religion.*

Atlantic Monthly: Issue for October, 1924; article by Adams, *Historic Determinism and the Individual.*

The Bobbs-Merrill Company: Sharp, *Education for Character.*

Boston University Bulletin: Athearn, *Protestantism's Contribution to Character Building in a Democracy.*

Character Education Institute: Starbuck, *et al.*, *Character Education Methods, The Iowa Plan.*

George H. Doran Company: Athearn, *The Indiana Survey of Religious Education;* Volumes I and II.

Front Rank Press: Bower, *The Educational Task of the Local Church.*

Heidelberg Press: Hauser, *Latent Religious Resources in Public School Education.*

The Macmillan Company: Ellwood, *Christianity and Social Science.*
Ellwood, *The Reconstruction of Religion.*
Grigg-Smith, *The Child's Knowledge of God.*
Thomas Nelson & Sons: *American Standard Revision of the Bible.*
Charles Scribner's Sons: Coe, *Social Theory of Religious Education.*
Coe, *What Ails Our Youth?*
Van Dyke, *Companionable Books.*
University of Chicago Press: Lobingier, *World Friendship Through the Church School.*
Shaver, *The Project Principle in Religious Education.*
The Survey Associates: *The Survey*, issue for June 1, 1926; article by Cabot, *Ethics and Education.*
Westminster Press: Kelly, *Missions in the Church School.*
Squires, *A Parish Program of Religious Education.*
Squires, *The Week-Day Church School.*
World Book Company: Hosic-Chase, *Brief Guide to the Project Method.*

I wish to thank the editors of the *Presbyterian Banner*, the *Church School Journal*, the *Homiletic Review*, and the *International Journal of Religious Education* for their permission to revise and use herein several chapters which have appeared in these magazines the past year.

The author wishes also to thank his graduate students of the current year for the stimulus and help of their keen discussions of and enthusiastic interest in the problems of this study; and espe-

cially Mr. Ivan C. Welty, Director of Religious Education in the United Church School, Oberlin, for his critical reading of the manuscript.

GEORGE WALTER FISKE.

Oberlin College, January 20, 1927.

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PART I

WHY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Purpose in Historic Aims and Principles

I

THE PRIMACY OF PURPOSE

In religion, in teaching, and in life, *purpose* is indispensable. The curse of life is aimlessness. Bees have a businesslike directness in their quest for honey-stuff. Butterflies and bats merely flutter and flit about aimlessly, tremulously, on palpitating wings, and get nowhere in particular, because that is where they were going. They lack the bee's sense of directness and purpose in life. The world is full of agitated folks who are hurry-scurrying about in perturbed circles and make only batlike progress, and butterfly folks who discover where they were going after they arrive.

This likeness of some humans to the instinct-ruled creation is readily understood in the light of the recent psychological novelty called behaviorism. If man is only a mechanism, a slave to environment with no regnant will in him, of course he is blind as a bat in many ways, and purposeless as a butterfly! It is an astonishing claim that "down to the most insignificant details of an individual's daily life, man's assumed control over his own action and destiny is an illusion. He *is*, in truth, as powerless to alter his present or his future as the mote eddying in the sunlight, troubled with no such illusory self-consciousness as mocks the highest of created beings."[1]

[1] Adams, J. T., *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1924, "Historic Determinism and the Individual."

Behaviorism Weakens Moral Responsibility

The recovery of balance on the part of some teachers who have played with extreme behaviorism and found its fruitlessness is encouraging. There is something of a drift toward a purposive behaviorism which is constructive and does not lose the human soul in transit, though some would call "purposive behaviorism" a contradiction in terms! But what could be a more dangerous philosophy of life to teach college boys and girls than the theory that their behavior is all purely mechanical, a mere blind mechanism? To tell them their souls are just figments of pious imagination is sufficiently unsettling; yet they may still believe in their own souls though the instructor may have lost his. But to reduce all conduct to a helpless, automatic response to stimuli, and to magnify environment to an absolute tyrant is to take away moral responsibility and to destroy one's sense of sin. If you simply cannot resist evil, because you are made that way, then the God or the Titan who made the mechanism of your impulses is to blame for your sins, and only he. Then there is no such thing as sin. There is only error, misfortune, unsocial conduct. Such moral fatalism is deadly to conscience, ideals, and character, particularly as it is usually accompanied by denial of a personal God. Group standards displace conscience. Ideals are laughed out of court as troublesome dreams. And a typical behaviorist tells his pupils, "I hear a lot about 'character' here, but I don't know what it means!"

Consciousness Must Master Mechanism

It is time we pulled out of this bog of animal

psychology of sheer mechanism and discovered again what makes humanity human. The mechanist may have lost his consciousness, but idealists are still awake to the regnant awareness of a self within, a living *soul* into which God has breathed the spirit of eternal life. There is such a thing as creative thinking. There is such a thing as self-conquest through ideals and personal loyalties. And there is such a thing as a God-guided life. Self-consciousness has made mechanism subordinate, though universal in extent, and has crowned humanity with its power for progress. Though adjustment to environment and conformity to it is the slave law of the brute creation, humanity has risen by mastery of environment through conscious selection and has escaped from much of this slavery. As Judd says, "The emergence of consciousness changed the trend of life from organic adaptation to intelligent conquest."[2] Even the struggle for existence in natural selection was an effort to maintain individuality. And when, in the great stream of life, human consciousness first appeared, it was life's declaration of independence, though the war for complete freedom is still on. With increasing, conscious control of the forces of life, and growing plasticity and capacity to learn, mankind has transcended instinct, and, though utilizing mechanism, need not be enslaved by it.

Man may not always be as free as he thinks he is, but conscious choice is not a mere delusion. Through self-mastery and self-expression, humanity has gradually achieved autonomous personality

[2] Judd, C. H., *Psychological Review*, March, 1910, Art., "Evolution and Consciousness."

and increasing control of environment, with a rising civilization. "For now abideth heredity, environment, and personal endeavor; but the greatest of these is personal endeavor." What Conn so aptly calls "the treasure-pile of civilization" is the accumulation of human experience, gathered from the splendid conquests of human consciousness and perpetuated by social heredity through the ascending generations. It is not too much to claim that this triumphant advance of humanity over the low levels of the past has been due to man's persistent purpose "to replenish the earth and subdue it," to rise superior to the material universe and the mechanism which enslaves it. It is this purpose which demonstrates man's spiritual kinship with God.

"I doubt not through the ages one increasing *purpose* runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

Likewise an individual's contribution to his generation depends first of all upon his definiteness of purpose. It does not involve merely personal ambition to make life count, to live life to the full with God's help. It involves also carefulness of aim, plan, design, constant study of ends and consequences and of means and methods in the light of these objectives. Such an attitude of mind is essential consecration to a life task. Purpose is half the victory, from the beginning. It glorifies a Cause and in turn is glorified by it. It galvanizes the will to achieve. It overrides obstacles and difficulties with the persistence of faith.

Purpose visualizes its own ideal and creates

motive-power to realize it. Purpose in Peter the Hermit produced the first crusade and a new devotion in the mediæval church. Purpose in Joan of Arc produced a new patriotism in the soul of France, akin to religion. Purpose in William Lloyd Garrison brought scorn to himself, but awoke a new social conscience in America regarding human slavery. Purpose in David Livingstone blinded him to danger and hardship and opened the dark continent to Christian missions. Purpose in Jesus Christ kept him true to his youthful vision of the kingdom of God's good will and finally gripped his followers with the same steadfast faith. Some new purpose has always been the cause and the dynamic in every reformation and every new chapter in the story of human progress, for purpose is the strategy of faith, the basis of hope, the courage in perseverance, the silent motive power in consecration, the hidden secret in all victory.

Religious Education Must Be Purposive

Just now in our modern movement of religious education, a revival of purpose is needed, and a clarifying of aims. It has successfully challenged the attention of the modern church. It has convinced us of its vital importance both for national character and the future of religion. It has won recognition as a part of the educational system of the land and has promoted its new program in accord with modern educational theory. In many churches there has been undoubted progress. A new generation of young people is rising to meet its responsibilities with sane, wholesome ideals of religion and life, and a forthright way of grappling

with its problems. This has largely been due to progressive churches and schools, leadership with vision and skill as well as devotion, and such agencies as summer camps, county and State young people's conferences, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. activities, and organized class and club groups which have made religion concrete, positively useful and thoroughly natural. In such circles purpose is by no means lacking.

But in some quarters old ways have grudgingly given place to new with little understanding of the changes involved. Caught in the drift toward modern educational methods, some churches are strangely tangled. Unaccustomed methods half-heartedly practiced have brought chiefly confusion. Experiments galore are indulged in, tentatively, rather unintelligently, hence half-successfully. After such blundering incursions into the field of modern methods, many a church school lapses back into the easier ruts of the old system, rather ashamed of the ungraded lessons and the nineteenth-century practice, yet understanding no other program. And in probably the majority of churches the routine of the conservative past is still unthinkingly followed, quite untouched either by modern educational theory or changes in religious emphasis. The teachers seldom ask themselves why they are doing what they are doing. Questions of aim and purpose are merely taken for granted.

Meanwhile astonishing progress has been made recently by American public schools. Boys and girls using old-fashioned quarterlies or perhaps sixteenth-century catechisms on Sunday are studying attractive twentieth-century textbooks in science

or literature on Monday. They enjoy all the interesting variety of the socialized recitation and the incentives of the project method on Friday and then come back Sunday to the prosy piety of the untrained Sunday-school teacher who follows the "Golden Rule of ancient pedagogy," and "teaches unto others as it was taught unto her." Through the week in countless towns and cities our boys and girls revel in the luxurious equipment of palatial high schools, not a few of them costing a million dollars, and then attend Sunday school in bare and unattractive, often inartistic churches, with woefully meager educational facilities. The vivid contrast puts an inevitable strain on the children's loyalty to the old church, and the parents wonder why. In many cities, to be sure, the churches have built magnificent structures which compare favorably with the new public schools, though often with little idea of the requirements of the modern program of religious education. Only recently have church architects discovered that the church school is or should be really a school.

The Clarifying of Purpose

It is the purpose of this book to attempt *to clarify the aims of religious education.* It will endeavor to show how the historical objectives in religious teaching have changed their emphasis from age to age, and to explain the modern program of teaching religion, in the light of the great motives which are still powerful. Within the limited scope of so brief a study, the question *Why?* will be brought to bear upon as many as possible of our modern usages, of organization and of method, in the hope

that we may *acquire the why habit* and do nothing aimlessly or without definite purpose. It is the hope of the author that those who consider these discussions worth reading will discover for themselves a fresh urgency in the great task of teaching religion and a deep sense of mission to have a share in its unique privilege.

Brief Bibliography of Selected References

Adams—"Historic Determinism and the Individual" (*Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1924).

Bentley—"The Mechanistic and Personalistic Psychological Contributions to the Field of Religious Education" (Boston University *Bulletin*).

Coffin—*Personality in the Making.*

Judd—"Evolution and Consciousness" (*Psychological Review*, March, 1910).

McDougall—*Outlines of Psychology.*

Squires—*Psychological Foundations of Religious Education.*

Youtz—*The Supremacy of the Spiritual.*

II

CAN RELIGION BE TAUGHT?

If it is true that "the soul of all culture is the culture of the soul," how is this superculture to be accomplished? Can culture be taught? Many would reply emphatically, No. The same people would for similar reasons say that no one can really teach religion. They claim that both culture and religion are too subjective to be taught. They are too personal and private, too subtle to be shared in the ordinary teaching process, too passive to be actively acquired as one gains a knowledge of chemistry. They seem to feel that if religion is taught, only God can be the teacher, because of the mysteriousness of the subject and its transcendent meanings.

A certain type of mind resents any invasion of the field of the inscrutable and dislikes to have the frontier of the unsearchable pushed back by investigating minds with an insatiable hunger for new truth. To such people only the old is true, only the mysterious is religious, and only revelation can teach it. They object to any attempt to rationalize the mysteries or to simplify theology. They are not looking for a religion which the childlike can comprehend or the wise elucidate. To them God is revealed only in the supernatural and nature is not divine. We are ready to grant that such a religion would be difficult to teach, and possibly few people would care to learn it.

But perhaps the religion of Jesus is something different. It may be just a wonderful way of living, as natural as it is spiritual, a human experience of God's life and love in the midst of our ordinary tasks. For the Christian it is a life of faith, love, and service of God and fellow men in accordance with the faith, ideals, and purposes of Jesus Christ. That is, it is Jesus' way of thinking, feeling, doing, and being throughout the whole scope of daily living, especially in relation to the supreme values of life. This Jesus-mode-of-life will lead the Christman into loving worship of God and a friendly life of good will and fair play among his fellows. Religion may include other things; but these are the real tests of religion. Can these things be taught?

How Has Religion Come to Us?

It is fair to ask, How has religion been passed on from generation to generation if it has not been taught? Has it been inherited? Certainly not organically, physically, for no one is born religious any more than he is born speaking his father's language. And there have been many unworthy sons of pious parents, which could not be if religion were inherited as one inherits his ten fingers. But though neither character nor religion is organically inherited, both are the priceless social heritage of a Christian home. Fortunately, we usually inherit our fathers and mothers, which is far better than inheriting their language or religion, and their Christian example is a powerful influence in our early years which can never be wholly lost. A sincere parent's religion is a natural element in the home experience which is shared by the children

and is quite apt to be adopted by them by the simple process of imitation. But is not this a very genuine form of teaching after all? Is not teaching by example as effective as teaching by precept?

Did Not Jesus Teach Religion?

It is clear that religion can somehow be taught, because Jesus succeeded in teaching it. His favorite title seems to have been "Teacher." The scribes were teachers of the law, that is, of theology; but he was a teacher of religion. What theology he taught was mostly practical theology. If religion cannot be taught, how was he able to teach it? Some aspects of religion he taught by precept, others by example, but always by sharing experience. Instruction he used generously, but he did not confine himself to it. For instance, he made no attempt to argue with people about immortality, or the personality of God, the reality of angels or the efficacy of intercessory prayer. He knew the kingdom of heaven cometh not by arguing or dogmatic teaching. It is even doubtful if he was in the habit of preaching formal sermons. But he had a great teacher's supreme gift of sharing his life with his pupils. He not only trained his disciples by the project method in the homes of Galilee, but the especially difficult lessons he taught them by demonstration. He developed their souls in such shared experiences as the storm at sea and the night of transfiguration. It is clear that Jesus actually taught religion, and we can do the same if we master even a part of his method; for in teaching religion to his friends he made his appeal to

identically the same mental functions they had to use in the process of learning anything.

Broaden Your Idea of Teaching

People who deny that religion can be taught usually have a narrow idea of the teaching process. They think of it as simply instruction. If teaching were merely the imparting of facts, passing on a body of subject matter, it is quite true that the heart of religion could not be taught, for its deepest realities are not facts but values, which can hardly be put adequately in intellectual terms. Teaching is the vital process of assisting an individual to solve his problems, form his habits, select his ideals, and acquire his attitudes toward the great ends of life; thus producing desired changes in his life and character and developing his personality through the continuous reconstruction of his experience. The scope of teaching is as broad and deep as experience itself. Its goals are social efficiency and complete living. Any important part of human experience like religion cannot be left out of the program of teaching without a twofold loss. It cripples the teaching program and it handicaps religion by stamping it as an unimportant elective.

Among the innumerable definitions of education that have challenged human interest there is none of any value which does not suggest the possibility and need of teaching religion as a part of the great learning process. When we think of education in terms of unfolding the personal powers of the child, we cannot forget that child's capacity for religion, for reverent worship of God, and devoted service of humanity. When we speak of education as the

introduction of control into experience, we cannot omit consideration of religion without neglecting the most powerful of all motives for self-control. When we speak of education as the acquisition of the social inheritance of the race, we must include the spiritual inheritance which religion contributes. From any viewpoint except that of the materialist, education is seen to have a religious phase and content. That is, education must be religious to be complete, which is simply saying we must teach religion as a vital part of human experience, or we leave education incomplete. If religion must be taught, then in some way or another it can be taught.

Achievable Factors in Teaching Religion

It helps to clarify our problem, which still puzzles some of us, if we analyze the content of religion and discover the elements of the process involved in teaching it. Is religion a cult, a form of worship? Then we can teach the desired ritual, and through practice in the forms, ceremonies, and sacraments inculcate religion in our children's hearts through training in worship. Is religion a creed, a form of belief? This has been the conviction of many religious leaders in the past and for centuries they taught the creed by catechetical instruction. Though catechisms have usually been unpedagogical and usually not graded to the children's mental level, it is possible to teach the ideas of any faith if we observe the law of apperception. Religious ideas can be taught, though they must be related to the child's present experience to be of any value.

Is religion faith in a book or a person? Then

the messages of the Bible can be taught and especially the message of the Christ life, his challenging ideals which grip the conscience and the loyalty of youth. Is religious experience an instantaneous fact or a process? If a process, then the steps of that process can be taught in relation to the changing needs of the growing child all through his plastic period of development. Is religion an unselfish, spiritual way of living? Then that way of doing and being can be imitated. Its secret motives and ideals can be discovered, explained, and presented vividly to the imagination, and lived again by admiring loyal followers. Is religion faith in immortality and an unseen God? Then we can be taught to "practice the presence of God" and live the kind of life that ought to be enduring, and faith will grow through faithfulness. Is religion the devotion of heart and will to some great ideal in life? Then that Christ ideal can be so concretely and vividly presented as to challenge the loyalty of impressionable youth whose native hero-worship welcomes the appeal. Is religion the development of Christlike character? Then we can furnish spiritual motives for Christian conduct, help our pupils to form habits of Christlike living, and incarnate the Christlike spirit again in their lives.

More Difficult Elements in the Problem

Is religion a vital experience with God? Does it depend upon a genuine God-consciousness? Then religious experience, like all other experience, must be a growth and can be stimulated and guided by a skillful spiritual horticulturalist. Doubtless it is the most difficult experience to guide, for it has to

do with the invisible and the intangible. Is religion communion with and a partnership with the Spirit of God? Then we can at least teach how this relationship can be attained. We cannot presume to control the presence or the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. We cannot guarantee the action of supernatural grace. It is self-evident that the more mystical elements in religious experience are the most difficult to teach, because emotional experience is always the most difficult to share.

Yet we can confidently teach the reliability of God's love, the dependableness of his help and his living presence. His potent spiritual energy is "as all-pervasive as ether, as exhaustless and unvarying as gravitation, and as necessary to the development of the spirit as are sunshine and vitamines to the body," as Betts and Hawthorne assure us in their *Method in Teaching Religion*. To endeavor to teach religion in its higher ranges of experience is certainly not to assume any control over the supernatural forces involved or any denial of their importance, much less to substitute educational mechanics for divine grace or spiritual power. Rather does it mean teaching the infinite importance of this supernatural source of power, and the ways in which the human heart can be opened to God's Spirit and can learn to co-operate with him in a vital partnership of life.

The Artist-Teacher's Power and Limitations

Can religion, then, be taught? Exactly as truly as *art* can be taught. No artist-teacher can make you an artist, a great painter or musician, and not even a prophet could *make* you religious. Jesus,

for example, failed to make Judas religious. But the artist can awaken the love of beauty in your soul and teach you the technic of reproducing beauty. Likewise the teacher of religion, if the spirit of God is in his soul, can teach you the art of religious living, can inspire you with the love of God, of truth, righteousness and justice, and can share with you in some degree the heights of his vision. But he cannot be religious for you, or give you by proxy his faith or his reality of communion with God.

Since the above was written a similar argument has been discovered in Dr. Richard C. Cabot's article on "Ethics and Education," which clarifies the possibility of teaching any art in spite of its difficulties and subtle limitations.

"One can write or lecture entertainingly about music, but to make another person musical is another task. . . . One can teach the technic of performance, the ability to chatter plausibly about music and the habit of attending and applauding concerts; but all this is not the delighted perception of musical beauty or the ability to express oneself in music. These seem to come not from without, but from within, spontaneous, incommunicable. Can one really teach music at all?

Yes, everyone knows that in music, as in any other art, teaching *has* its place. One can not listen, play, or compose for another. But one can direct his attention to something previously unheard, one can share with him one's own enthusiasm, which is often contagious, one can help him to keep working in the mine from which he is to cut out his own nuggets of beauty. It is true that the central core

of his musical appreciation, the central act of his musical expression is a holy of holies into which no other can enter. . . . Yet others are of use to every student of art. In fact, he can't avoid their influence. He never studies alone. His teaching may come chiefly from the old masters, the great composers, the inspired writers. But still the personality of another has always helped to develop him, and *that is teaching.* The living teacher is of use in calling attention, not only to the existence, but to the special beauties of great works of art. By emphasis, analysis, interpretation one may lead the student to the springs of beauty, and though one cannot make him drink, without us he might never have found the water at all.

"The same difficulties challenge the teaching of ethics. We can see, and everybody knows that in music, teaching is invaluable; no one who seriously wants to be musical goes without it. So I conclude that if ethics cannot be taught, no art can be taught, no literature can be taught, no history can be taught except by rote, no science worthy of the name can be taught. For sooner or later we reach in each of these subjects (as in ethics) a citadel inviolable, where the spontaneous and unique personality of the individual must see, appreciate, choose, express itself and no other. Yet in ethics, as in all other subjects essential to human life, the individual's own thought, act, perception can be aroused, nourished, strengthened, given pause, startled into fruition, prepared for by labor—all through the influence of teachers living and dead."[1]

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[1] Cabot, R. C., in the *Survey* for June 1, 1926, abridged.

Doctor Cabot's clear reasoning applies just as truly to our problem of the teaching of religion as to the teaching of ethics. We must conclude that if any of the fine arts can be taught, both ethics and religion can be taught. Similar difficulties are encountered by all artist-teachers who would share visions of beauty and teach living values. We may realize fully the limitations and still conclude that to a large extent both the theory and practice of religion can be taught.

We can teach the content of religious ideals and the manner and motives of Christian living. We can teach the forms of Christian worship and train young worshipers to find God's presence and power in a reverent sharing in worship. We can lead them to the mystery of the cross and explain what its redemptive power means to us. Our own faith we cannot give our pupils; but it will greatly stimulate theirs. They must grow their own faith through experience; but we can guide that experience. We can teach them by projects to practice the fine art of living the Christ way. We can open to them avenues of loving service in which they discover the joys of self-giving. We can make the Christ live for them, not only as we picture him powerfully to their imagination and arouse their loyalty, but as we lead them to discover his experience in ways of service and win their loyalty to the kind of religion he himself lived. Thus we can teach them to discover religious ideals. We can train them in habits of religious living. And we can help them to discover and to test the Christian motives for conduct and character. To do this is to teach religion. No teacher in the world has a

greater privilege or is afforded a more fascinating opportunity.

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III

PAST AND PRESENT AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The present generation in America has witnessed the most vigorous attempt in history to teach religion. It has involved radical and expensive changes in architecture, equipment, curriculum, organization, leadership, methods, and goals. This may justly be called a new program. In fact, in many respects it is so radically new that people are asking: Is this much-exploited "Religious Education" a new gospel or just another fad? Is it a costly revolution or a normal development in American church life? Is it a cooling-off process, a piety-extinguisher, a damper on evangelism, and a substitute for faith? Or is it really giving fresh reality to religion and a new effectiveness to religious teaching?

Such are the questions raised by many anxious or curious folk who are wondering what religious education is aiming at. They see church programs, sacred with age, scrutinized and scrapped, replaced by bewildering novelties. They see church architecture, even as recent as the late nineties, regardless of its comfort and beauty, remodeled to meet the new demands for departmental assembly halls, separate classrooms, little theaters, movie booths and kitchenettes! The grandchildren of the pious who resisted the invasion of the church organ, that "de'il's kaig o' whustles," are now wondering why

mystery plays and pageants are more popular than prayer meetings, and why modern children rather play the Bible story than sit in straight rows to hear the teacher preach about it. Why all these changes, and why this new dialect of social-project, problem-discussion, pupil-centered courses, graded-worship, dramatized worship, Daily Vacation Bible Schools, week-day church schools? People are asking: Do the leaders responsible for this new educational merry-go-round know whither they are going, or are they just blindly experimenting?

There is no denying that we are in the midst of a movement. The old Sunday school is "being done good to"—always a thankless task. The majority of churches still resist the movement, but are gradually being drawn into it, sometimes with little intelligent understanding of the reasons therefor or the aims and purposes of the new plans they have adopted. Often such blind and half-hearted adoption of the new program results in confusion and failure, a year or two of chaos, followed by reaction, a lapse back into the comfortable routine of the past, with progress postponed for another decade. It is evident that the churches need a clearer understanding of the aims and objectives of the new movement of religious education.

Have We Outgrown the Aims of the Past?

Any true study of life must begin with the past. Radicals in this new movement may be inclined to say our educational past was all wrong, that only *new* methods and principles are useful or true, and therefore history has nothing to teach us. The present writer begs to differ. There were wise

teachers even before 1900! Rightly to understand our educational aims to-day, we must discover the aims of Christian education through the centuries past. The church has always been an educator, more or less successfully. What has it been aiming at? Perhaps it was not always consciously aiming, but there was always purpose in its teaching. What about those great historic aims of nineteen centuries past? Have we outgrown them all? Can it be that Paul and Clement and Justin Martyr, and Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli were *all* wrong in their methods, as well as the more recent Wesley, Raikes, Vincent, Trumbull, and Schauffler? There must have been some value in every sincere purpose which gripped religious teachers and their followers in every generation past. Let us swiftly survey the historic aims which have put dynamic into the sacrificial work of Christian teachers from the days of the apostles.

The Early Aims of the Great Catechists

Saint Paul and the teachers he taught had a very clean-cut objective. Their glorious task was to make Christ-men out of pagans, in spite of the persecutions of the Roman Empire, and all the ostracism of its fashionable, wealthy, cultured paganism. So for three centuries we find these early Christians promoting an aggressive and thorough program of religious education. *Antipaganism* was its definite aim. The catechumens in the schools of Alexandria and Rome were faithfully taught the mysteries of the Christian faith for three years before they were welcomed into full membership in the church. It was not a simple task to

transform a pagan—body, mind and spirit—into a Christian. Those early teachers, Clement, Origen and many others, did their work thoroughly, or the church submerged in paganism would never have survived. To join the Christian Church on confession of faith was not regarded lightly or superficially in those days. It was preceded by a rigid course of training which won the respect of all concerned. It was a genuine teaching of religion. Before its completion the new convert from paganism really knew both the religion about Christ and the Jesus way of living. The teaching aims of these catechumen schools were frankly social and ethical as well as doctrinal, like the aims of the Master himself. In the midst of our modern paganism, have we outgrown these aims? We cannot safely say "Yes."

But when the pagan empire under Constantine was baptized Christian the zeal of the teacher waned. For a thousand years after the church taught without enthusiasm. The ordinary Christian got little instruction, even in services of worship. Religious education was mostly reserved for future priests and monks, in the long, dark day when education itself was only for the fortunate few, in the ranks of the rich and powerful. *The ecclesiastical aim* was the sole objective in religious education, to keep the church alive and train its future leadership, and incidentally to develop a loyal following among its members. It was a lamentable overemphasis, but was it not a necessary aim? The church must always teach to live. Of course it should not be the highest of its aims, but we dare not neglect it.

The "Doctrinal" and "Knowledge of the Bible" Aims

The great Reformation brought fresh necessity for religious education and truer clarity of aims. Protestantism must proclaim its faith and the reasons for its faith. Every great reformer wrote his creed and his catechism and made them the basis of instruction in Protestant doctrine. Meanwhile the new printing-press multiplied Bibles and the middle-class multitudes learned to read them in their own mother tongue. The logical completion of the English Reformation in Puritanism and the Wesleyan movement resulted in strong emphasis on knowledge of the Bible as the bulwark of faith. From that time to this, one of the chief aims in religious education has been to teach the Bible, with its messages of inspiration and eternal life. Have we outgrown these aims in our complacent age? We have discovered new aims, to be sure, which are very significant, but so long as a thinking world demands a thoughtful message a reasonable stress on doctrine will be necessary, though far less than in the past; and until a better Bible appears—which is extremely unlikely and unnecessary—we must still go back to the Old and New Testaments for the highest inspirations and the main content of our Christian teaching. Whether knowledge of the Bible for its own sake is a legitimate purpose, we shall consider in a later chapter.

The Evangelistic Purpose in Teaching

The Sunday schools of the early nineteenth century began with the single aim of teaching the Bible, but they soon became the forefront of the

great home-missionary movement in the pioneer days of our national expansion, and evangelism became their great objective and chief emphasis. In fact, thousands of pioneer churches were first organized as evangelistic Sunday schools. For many decades the chief criterion of a local Sunday school's success was the number of conversions each year, and the entire movement was far more inspirational than educational. A complicated system of conventions was developed through the years until over twenty-two thousand were held annually, the purpose of which was very slightly educational until recently. The revival emphasis of the past century came to a focus in the "little parishes of eight," as Professor A. R. Merriam styled the local Sunday-school classes, where every teacher was a more or less active and skillful evangelist, and where the chief aim was to produce decisions for Christ and new members for the church. Thus the *institutional aim* supplemented the *evangelistic purpose* and was almost equally prominent. Have we outgrown these objectives, in the midst of our broader knowledge of educational processes? We have discovered their overemphasis. We have reminded ourselves that important as conversion, or personal decision for Christ, is, it is after all only a beginning: but shall we ignore beginnings? That our modern programs of religious education must find room for sane evangelism and must stress strongly the spiritual emphasis will be the contention of our next chapter.

Our Modern Aim Must Be Eclectic

The trouble with these great historic aims of

religious education was their overemphasis. They stressed one aim at a time. Let us not perpetuate this blunder of narrowness. Some are doing that very thing to-day. In their love for the concrete and vivid they bank everything on the new-old art of biblical dramatics. Or falling in love with the project method, and prompted by behavioristic psychology, they say, "Nothing but conduct counts, therefore cut out all the doctrine." Or with the new stress on social education, they discount Bible teaching and other ancient tradition and demand motivation from present-day living. We must guard against such one-sided narrowness. Let us be thankful for the educational vision which has furnished us our *pupil-centered aim* of personal development, and our *social aim*, to socialize the individual and help him adjust himself efficiently to his environment. But let us accept no narrower objective than *the spiritualizing of life*, of the life of our community, our country and our world, and the redeeming of the future of the race. And in combining and projecting these great aims, for the perpetuating of a Christian civilization, we shall not neglect the other historic aims of the Christian Church, so far as they can add their part to the enriching of Christian experience and the interpreting of life. For whatever else it may be aiming at, in its interestingly varied activities to-day, religious education is not proposing to substitute education for religion. What we do purpose is to furnish a real *education in religion* which shall be more efficient than the haphazard and partial efforts of the past.

Doubtless the old idea that religion was only a

part of life, claiming but one-seventh of time as holy and one-tenth of money as consecrated, had something to do with these narrower aims. To-day religion is coterminous with life. All life is sacred. Nothing is secular. Hence the modern education in religion must include the spiritual motivation of all our living. Various objectives in this modern teaching purpose will be discussed in the following chapters.

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IV

EVANGELISM AND THE SPIRITUAL PURPOSE

Someone has said that the difficulties of the Y. M. C. A. are largely in the Y. and the C. Similarly, the chief trouble with the Sunday school has been in the *school.* It has been an inspirational institution, but even the children have hardly recognized it as an educational institution. It has usually been a children's church rather than a true school. That is why there is so little real study in many church schools, and practically no home preparation. To educationalize the Sunday school, then, is the first task of modern religious education, to challenge this religious institution with educational ideals, in order that religion may be effectively taught.

Now, this may be our first great task, but it is not our ultimate goal. The religious educator who would substitute education for religion, just because in the past we have substituted religion for education, is no friend of the church or the church school. Would he have us replace one blunder by another? This emphasis on method and technic has naturally given rise to the suspicion that our modern program of religious education is religiously weak in its anxiety really to be educational. We must grant that in some quarters this suspicion is well-founded.

The Spiritual Purpose Must Be Paramount

Let us frankly face this new danger and ask, "What are our educational gains costing us in spiritual losses?" It is fine to have a completely graded school and thoroughly trained teachers, but has our graded worship lost its warmth and fervor? Do our professional teachers win their pupils for Christ? It is fine to have our progressively socialized curriculum and our project methods, but what is the actual result in the religious experience of our boys and girls? It is fine to give our pupils the modern appreciation of the Bible as great literature and its historical development in human history, but in discovering its human elements have they lost the sense of its divineness? Fine for young folks to have many doubts removed by discovering that the Bible never claims to be verbally inspired; but have they lost its inspiration altogether, or have they found a more real inspiration in the *lives* behind the Book? With all our educational gains there must not be spiritual losses, and there need not be.

The spiritual purpose must be kept paramount in religious education. We must furnish spiritual motives for conscience, conduct, and character. We must furnish religious ideas for life's future ideals and then arouse the highest loyalties and attitudes of heart to give spiritual power to these ideals. To succeed in these spiritual aims, the church school must exalt its training in worship as the climax of its program. It must develop the prayer life of both pupils and teachers. It must never get far from the life and example of Jesus, whatever course is studied. His ideals of living must always be our

criteria for judging what is right and true. It must constantly teach the nearness of God, and therefore the sacredness of all life, and the naturalness of Christian experience in all the daily routine. As the growing life expands in activities and interests, it must be shot through with spiritual motive for the Christ's sake, until all companionships and friendships, all work and play, as well as worship and service shall be filled with the spirit of earnest devotion. Thus, "whatsoever ye do," the whole life becomes spiritualized. This must ever be our ultimate purpose in religious education. We shall maintain at all costs our spiritual emphasis. For what shall it profit a Sunday school if it gain the whole world of expert education, and lose its own soul?

Where Does Evangelism Come In?

A professional evangelist, too noted to need naming, once dramatically asserted, "If I had a million dollars, I would invest nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine dollars and ninety-nine cents in evangelism, and perhaps one cent in religious education!" He evidently felt that the latter aims to be a substitute for the former. It is true that the modern leaders of religious education make no place in their program for the professional revivalist in their work with children and youth. But few, if any of them, would leave out *evangelism*. Revivalism is only one method, in the great work of evangelism, and the least educational and least natural of methods. Like all mass efforts, it is too wholesale a method to do full justice to the individual.

Like all appeals to crowd-psychology to rouse the feelings, it is emotionally dangerous. As Horne says, "Waves of emotion dethrone thought." Like all superficial treatment of social disease, its results are meager and not lasting. Squires' careful investigations show this conclusively. He says: "It has been demonstrated that of the converts brought into the fellowship of believers through the customary revival methods, eighty-seven per cent fall away in five years. Of the converts brought into the church through the Sunday school and the pastor's communicant class, sixty out of every hundred are still found faithful after five years. In the matter of securing an enduring attachment to the Christian faith, the educational method is more than four times as efficient as the revivalistic method."[1] If only thirteen per cent of revival converts can be found after five years, is the revival worth what it costs? The present writer would say Yes, provided the revival be not made a substitute for the more natural method of religious education with young people, and the revivalist confine his attention to the adults who need him. Reformatory evangelism for adults is still necessary as a last resort because of the partial failure of educational evangelism; but it should always be regarded as a supplementary, not the primary work of the church. Our conflict, then, is not with evangelism, but with revivalism. Let the revivalist continue his needed work of character reformation and reconstruction of adults. The evangelization of children and youth is a natural process of spiritual

[1] Squires, W. A., *A Parish Program of Religious Education.* Reprinted by permission.

education, which is the most sacred responsibility of the religious education forces of the church.

Educational Evangelism Often Criticized

The writer believes in wedding evangelism and education, as the skillful work of many wise pastors has accomplished. There is an educational evangelism to-day which is both sane and fervent, but it is criticized from both extremes. Revivalism dreads it and education suspects it. The former honestly fears that the quiet process of growing into loyalty to Christ lacks the dynamic, the motive power, of revival conversion. The latter is now beginning to claim that conversion itself is unnecessary in normal Christian families and the entire evangelistic point of view antiquated and outgrown.

Doctor Betts' deadly parallel columns, in his *New Program of Religious Education*, in which he sharply contrasts "The Educational Point of View" with "The Evangelistic Point of View," have aroused widespread comment. The comparison is very striking, incisive, and educationally sound, but we wish he had named the latter "The Revivalistic Point of View" instead of "Evangelistic." What he is really censuring is revivalism, with its assumptions that the child is born sinful and depraved, that the work of the church is chiefly reclamation, and that when a person is converted he is permanently "saved." Granting all these objections as theologically sound, the work of educational evangelism still remains.

It is partly a question over the usefulness of the terms "conversion" and "evangelism." The present

writer feels that these good old terms are too useful to be lost. They can be redeemed by new content and interpretation, and then be used discriminatingly. Though Doctor Betts throws them both away, he essentially redefines them in his own words. If the religious-educational process involves a succession of changes, and conversion is just a spiritual change, why not continue to use the term? It need not always have the extreme meaning, "reclamation from spiritual indifference, hostility, or evil."

However, as the years pass, the writer finds his graduate students in the psychology of religion increasingly hesitant about using the term "conversion" except in this extreme sense. The more normal a student's religious growth, with the advantages of an earnest Christian home, a modern church and church school, the less he feels that he has undergone any sort of conversion experience and the more he regards the psychology of conversion as somewhat abnormal. He has himself enjoyed the normal unfolding of his spiritual nature resulting from a natural Christian nurture adapted to his needs from early childhood up, and the personal decisions and conscious choices he made from time to time do not seem revolutionary enough to call any one of them a conversion. This trend suggests that the word "conversion" may be passing out of use so far is it refers to the personal commitment to Christ of a young person in the normal genetic process of Christian nurture. Both the dictionary and the Gospels, however, show that this loss of a good old word is unnecessary. Conversion means a change or a turning. There are many pos-

sible degrees in the change or the angle of turning. Granted that conversion involves taking the first turn to the right, must the angle of that turning be 90° or 45° or even 180°—a moral right-about-face—to be rightly called conversion? The radical nature of the conversion will naturally vary in proportion to the angle of turning from evil and selfishness to God, but the moment the youth makes his final decision for Christ he makes that significant turning which rightly orients and motivates his life. Of course the values of conversion naturally vary greatly with individuals of different age and experience.

The Work of Spiritual Horticulture

The century past made the reformatory conversion of adults the chief work of the church. Very quietly the emphasis has changed. Now the great work of the church is the conversion of the child. As we succeed with the latter, the former becomes less necessary. Our ideal is to guide the unfolding of the spiritual nature of every child, and by loving Christian nurture to develop genetically the child's religious experience, with habits, interests, and ideals appropriate to his years. This is the gracious, fascinating task of spiritual horticulture. No one puts it more beautifully than Doctor Betts: "The child whose religious consciousness develops normally will naturally and inevitably come to a time or times of personal acceptance of the Christian way (that is, of Christ), thus adopting by conscious choice the relationship and obligations into which he has gradually been led from earliest childhood. This personal commitment of the

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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

child-Christian is both natural and desirable."[2] To guide, prepare for and secure this personal acceptance and commitment is exactly the work of educational evangelism. The modern program of religious education still stresses this high aim. Departmental organization and graded worship and teaching make it even more effective than in the past. Special courses of study of *Our Church* supplement the pastor's classes for children in preparation for church membership, and pastor, parents, teachers, and best friends form a magic circle of prayerful influence, earnestly plotting that God may have his way in that child's heart and life. Similar aims, appropriate to each period of development, endeavor to secure constant, healthy progress through childhood and youth.

If such a program is faithfully carried out, is it fair for any critic to say that "the old Sunday school trained the *heart* but this new religious education trains only the *head*"? Let it be distinctly understood that *religious education aims to develop heart religion.* An important part of its technic is the development of right attitudes, noble ideals, loves and loyalties which form the deeply emotional side of religious experience. We are quite aware that religion gets its life power from feeling, which is its very root system. Feeling gives religion its sense of value and reality. Feeling gives conviction and assurance to faith. An emotionless religion is a mere philosophy or code of ethics, devoid of life and the power to lift life. The inner life of religion requires feeling to keep it alive. Progressive reli-

[2] Betts, G. H., *The New Program of Religious Education.* Used by permission of The Abingdon Press.

gious thinking points the way to progress, but the thought without feeling is dead. *Thinking gives light, but feeling is power.* Leaders of religious education realize this and are not neglecting to develop the feelings, the attitudes and loyalties in the religion of youth. This is our most strategic work.

The Strategy of Early Adolescence

Students of religious psychology agree that the psychological moment for conversion (call it personal commitment if you wish) is early adolescence, the time of new birth and flood-tide in the human personality. Individuality now is bursting into full flower and the very world becomes new because of fresh viewpoints and new visions. Now supremely is the time when "He that sitteth upon the throne" seems to say: "Behold, I make all things new. The first things (childish things) are passed away." Manifestly now is the time for the birth of the new spiritual life with all the rest, and our task is to watch for the sunrise. Nature is about to open the door of the soul. Out of the chrysalis of childhood, bound by tradition and dependence upon others—the opinions and choices of others—flies forth the free spirit of the youth, for the first time fully capable of freedom of decision in the broadest sense, in the complete individual. The decision just now for Jesus Christ and his way of living, and the new life of the Spirit, is projected by the whole force of a freshly awakened personality. We have said enough to show that the spiritual aim is still paramount in religious education, and that a sane and natural evangelism, adapted to developing experience, is a very important part of the program.

Our purpose in teaching religion will surely be a spiritual purpose, whatever else may be involved

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V

IS BIBLE TEACHING AN END OR A MEANS?

"Strong in frills and fads, but weak in content" was the criticism of the religious education program of a very modern church. "The children are learning everything but the Bible" was the observation of another critic. Some of the same people who wanted to know "Where does evangelism come in?" are anxiously asking, "What does the new program of religious education do with the Bible?" With graded lessons sharpened to a fine psychological point, and elective courses on such a varied menu as popular amusements, the heroics of world heroes, the founders of world religions, and toads, bats, and owls (a lesson in a "through-nature-to-God" course), we should not be surprised to find some reaction against this flood of extra-biblical courses. A conservative group in the International Lesson Committee has always opposed this trend and stands for *the Bible only* as the content of religious teaching. For many years they have opposed graded Sunday-school lessons and their use of non-biblical materials. We may well investigate the question, What is legitimate material and worthwhile subject matter for our use in teaching religion?

Should We Teach Only the Bible?

For nearly two centuries, when there were no Sunday schools, religion was the fourth "R" in the

public schools of America, and the doctrinal catechism was the subject matter taught. The Bible was only secondary, though it furnished proof texts generously in support of the doctrines. Then immigration and diversity of faiths made American life complex and forced the secularization of our tax-supported schools, partly compensated by the rise and rapid spread of Sunday schools throughout the land. At once the Bible took first place, displacing the catechism. This was probably because the Sunday schools were then under lay leadership. The layman loved the Bible and, lacking formal theological training, cared less for doctrinal formulas. In the day when "storing the memory" was supposed to be the whole educational process, memorizing the Bible became the chief task of the Sunday school. Records of prize contests report cases of children committing the entire four Gospels to memory, and one who learned 8,336 verses in six weeks; while one poor girl recited the Old Testament from Genesis to Isaiah, genealogies and all! For many years the only study helps were Question Books containing nothing but questions on chapters in the Bible. And for fifty-four years (since 1872) the International Uniform Lessons have used nothing but biblical materials as the basis of instruction, though 60% of the chapters of the Bible they have never touched, including five whole books. The International Graded Lessons, authorized in 1908 against very vigorous protest, have covered all but 37.6% of the Bible, according to Weigle's figures, but have also introduced nonbiblical material for teaching, and now many independent lesson courses furnish us a broad range of

choice, as suggested above. Religious leaders have come to recognize that the Bible, though unique in its inspirational character and value, does not monopolize all the world's inspirational or religious literature. We find there is much extra-biblical material of great value to supplement the Bible in teaching religion, though it must not displace it.

Why Children Need Non-Biblical Material

We must frankly acknowledge that the Bible was written by adults for adults, long ago and far away. Of course this is not saying that it has no value for children, but most of it seems very remote from the living experience of modern American children and youth. It must be interpreted in terms of their present world, to be made real to them. It must be connected vitally with human life, or it will not seem to be a part of human history at all. For many children Palestine is a Holy Land somewhere between earth and heaven. They are surprised to find it on the map. The same with Bible characters and experiences. They seem superhuman if not quite mythical. To make Bible religion vital to our youth we must supplement it by numerous contacts with life and other literature. Otherwise God will seem to them merely a vague Figure in the past, not a living Presence to-day.

The study of missionary biography has opened to us a great new Acts of the Apostles, just as thrilling as the stories of Stephen and the shipwrecked Paul. Many other pages of human heroism, found in every race's history, remind our youth that they too can make their lives sublime; and there is not room in

the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, or the entire Bible, for all these heroes of faith. Moreover, to study Savonarola, Howard, Florence Nightingale and Mackay makes Isaiah, Joseph, Jonathan, Queen Esther, and the doughty Daniel seem more truly human and their ideals really attainable. A reverent study of human history A. D. makes Bible history B. C. more surely human, and helps us to trace the continuous presence and purpose of God through it all. It is a great moment in his widening experience when a boy discovers for himself that the whole world is God's world and always has been. A reasonable amount of religiously motivated nature-study will show him that all the processes of natural life reveal God's ways of working. This will save him from needless scientific doubts in college years. Evolution will have no terrors for him. He will never commit the folly of trying to fight science by legislation! And as Bower says, "There should be enough social material to lead the child to feel that his life is caught up in a network of relations with other persons who are also God's children, to whom he is bound by ties of brotherhood because they are all bound together to the Fatherhood of God."[1] Judicious selection from this wide field of great inspirational literature will unify life and religion for our children. Without it the Bible and its religion may remain transcendent, reverenced from afar, but not taken into their present living experience. The ignorant worship of a transcendent Bible never saved a soul.

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[1] Bower, W. C., *The Educational Task of the Local Church.* Reprinted by permission of the Christian Board of Publication.

Our Modern Curriculum Pupil-Centered

In recent years educational theories from the public-school field have strongly influenced religious education. Educational psychology has revolutionized both curricula and methods of teaching. Child-study has revealed to teachers the way human personality unfolds and the needs of the child at each stage of development. So religious educators adopted as an aim *the development of religious personality*, recognizing the need of a growing religious experience suited to the capacity of the growing life at every stage. Consequently, the curriculum, which used to be material-centered, has become more and more *pupil-centered.* Our aim used to be primarily to teach the Bible, trusting to its magic power to work miracles in life. Now our aim is primarily to teach boys and girls.

Perhaps no one has stated this radical change in aim more sharply than Watson, who expresses the extreme reaction thus:

"Throughout Sunday-school history it has been assumed that the main business, and usually the exclusive business, of the Sunday school is to teach the Bible. . . . The presupposition remained that growth in spiritual living is correlative with the number of facts known about the Bible, church history, or missionary biography. The modern movement in education attacks precisely this cherished citadel. Any curriculum composed of book matter, whether in arithmetic or religion, is challenged. The Bible as a formal textbook is placed upon the defensive. Educators point out that growth comes, not through schooling in the traditional sense, but through entering into life activi-

ties, meeting problems of the real world here and now. The way to learn to think, to love, and to serve is to be placed in situations which demand thought, which awaken love, and which call forth service. Bible teaching is accused of having made much ado about religion, but having produced little religion. It has too often been dreary and futile, imposed on children by main strength and awkwardness, and not a response to the free demands of child life."[2]

Even though we may react a little against this extreme functional emphasis, we must recognize that there is good common sense in it.

Some very zealous people have made a veritable crusade of the movement to require the reading of the Holy Scriptures in every public school of the land. Tons of publicity have been broadcasted, thousands of dollars have been expended, thousands of addresses and sermons have been delivered to "put the Bible into the schools." One after another, many Legislatures have yielded to this pressure and have passed laws requiring at least ten verses of the Bible to be read daily in every school of their State. And they call this religious education! Throughout his boyhood in Massachusetts the writer was accustomed to this daily Bible reading in the public schools. He likes the custom, when it is observed in a reverent spirit, and not resentfully under compulsion. But it is a poor substitute for real religious *education*. Faith in the effectiveness of such formal use of the Bible, unaccompanied even by comment or explanation, is

[2] Watson, *Case Studies for Teachers of Religion*. Reprinted by permission of Association Press.

very naïve. It assumes that the very words of Scripture have in themselves a magical power. Only get them read, and a subtle spiritual influence automatically makes them effective. Thus argued a dear old advocate of this custom, with tears in his eyes and emotion in his voice. Unfortunately, there is no magic in any body of subject matter or teaching materials. The test of all teaching materials and methods is the actual effect upon the person taught. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Bible has great ethical power—but not because of the magic in its words.

No Curriculum an End in Itself

We teach nothing to-day for its own sake, not even the Bible. We no longer teach geometry as mental gymnastics, or "memory gems" for the sake of storing the mind. As Watson says, "It is no more justifiable to stuff a boy with information in which he has no present interest than to stuff him with bread and butter at the close of his meal on the ground that next week he may be hungry."[3] To teach the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes, *just to have them in mind*, because they are noble and beautiful precepts with old and sacred associations, would be nearly as foolish as to teach chemical formulæ to a blind musician who has no use for science. We do not teach the Bible as an end, but as a means to the end of Christian character and experience. These great precepts from the Old and New Testaments are grafted into the child's ideals of noble and beautiful living while

[3] Watson, *Case Studies for Teachers of Religion.* Reprinted by permission of Association Press.

his growing experience interprets their meaning and gives them motive power. They become of value to him only when they really enter his life, control his impulses, win his loyalty, and dominate his habits. Thus also with the great stories of the Bible. Their value is not in themselves, but in what they accomplish, as they challenge the child's vivid imagination, feed his hunger for reality, stand the test of his idealism and become blue-prints for his own conduct. As Betts concisely says, "The test of the effectiveness of the curriculum is whether those who pursue it live more purely, act more helpfully, experience more richly. Its lessons must flower in deeds and bear fruit in character."[4]

The Incomparable Bible Still Supreme

Our modern emphasis on the pupil-centered aim, however, must not be misunderstood as any reflection on the Bible or failure to appreciate its unique value in religious education. Nothing can ever make the Bible unnecessary. In all the world's inspirational literature it stands supreme. As Van Dyke says: "No other book in the world has had such a strange vitality, such an outgoing power of influence and inspiration. Not only has it brought to the countries in whose heart it has been set new ideals of civilization, new models of character, new conceptions of virtue and hopes of happiness, but it has also given new impulse and form to the shaping imagination of man and begotten beauty in literature and the other arts. Suppose it were possible to dissolve away all the works of art

[4] Betts, G. H., *The Curriculum of Religious Education.* Used by permission of the Abingdon Press.

which clearly owe their being to thoughts, emotions, or visions derived from the Bible—how it would impoverish the world!"[5] Of course we must recognize that the Bible is not equally valuable or inspiring in all its parts. Some of its undiscriminating friends have claimed too much for it. Even the orthodox Uniform Lessons have never in fifty-four years found any teaching value in the Song of Solomon or the book of Lamentations; but sixty-one of the sacred books have yielded their lessons of unique spiritual insight and power. The Bible is the finest literary product of spiritual living, hence its authority for religion to-day.

So while we cannot agree with the man who claims, "Materials taken from the Bible possess a peculiar spiritual potency whether they are capable of being understood and applied by the child or not," we still believe that the Bible is the clearest fountain of spiritual wisdom the world has known, and a trustworthy record of the highest spiritual achievements of humanity. It is the New Testament which gives us the Christ in all his matchless beauty of moral perfection and his intimate knowledge of the Father-God. That fact alone would make the Bible indispensable and unique. But after we have paid the highest possible tribute of praise to the Bible we all love, we are forced to acknowledge that the teaching of the Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, for the *Master-Teacher put the child, not the Bible, in the midst.* We teach the Bible, not for its own sake, but for the child's sake. Yet among all possible

[5] Van Dyke, H., *Companionable Books*, Chapter I, "The Book of Books." Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

materials of teaching, the Bible must ever retain first place, or "the child in the midst" will irreparably suffer, and our very civilization will lose its Christian character.

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VI

IS PUPIL DEVELOPMENT OUR ULTIMATE PURPOSE?

It is clear that the modern program of religious education is giving fresh reality to the religion of childhood and a new effectiveness to religious teaching. It is not a mere fad, though in some spots on the map it may run to faddish extremes. It is not a piety-extinguisher, though it may easily lose the spiritual emphasis, just as intellectual preaching sometimes does. Our preceding three chapters have shown that wise religious educators have not thrown away the past. We have outgrown the *emphases* of the teaching-aims of the past, just as general education has, and for similar reasons, for the educational movement is really a unit. But with the modern pupil-centered aim we still value uniquely the Bible, as an indispensable means of giving content to instruction and motivation to personal growth in character, though Bible teaching should no longer be an end in itself. And though evangelism is no longer the chief aim of the church school, and revivalism for children is frankly avoided, educational evangelism on the personal basis is a very important part of our program.

Many modern churches furnish now a more natural religious training than ever in the past, fitted to the growing needs of their children and youth, which makes the great choices, decisions, and

personal commitments of life as natural as prayer itself and with quite permanent results. Revivals for adults may still be needed, conducted when possible, not by religious hypnotists, but by men with the pastoral touch. And let no one doubt that loyalty to Christ and his kingdom of God's good will is the supreme motive power still in religious education.

"Is It Well With the Child?"

How appropriate this inscription for the cornerstone of a church school! It was the happy thought of the builders of Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Cleveland Heights. In making the welfare of the child central they were loyal to the example as well as the ideals of the Master. "Is it well with the child?" is the chief anxiety of religious education to-day. We cannot forget that "Feed my lambs" was one of the latest injunctions of our Lord. He first of all discovered the infinite possibilities of a child. No one before him seems to have had this prophetic, strategic vision. We are simply following Christ in our pupil-centered aim. Everything now must bend to the religious needs of the child, quite reversing the policy of the past. Hitherto in most churches adult preferences and comfort have had the right of way, because adults pay the bills. Adults like and think they need eloquent preaching, high-priced choirs, elegant churches with richly cushioned pews, so the work with the children has been kept on the copper basis. Anything was good enough for the Sunday school. Like the conies, they were "a feeble folk." They could be supported by the pennies of the poor!

That heresy must pass, and is gradually passing. *The child must be given the right of way.* His needs now dictate church architecture, equipment, program and salaried staff, curriculum, activities and methods, because at all cost we must not fail to conserve the infinite values of our child life. The child has changing interests, capacities, and needs, changing with every year. We must know these fascinating facts about his growing life and then make all our plans accordingly. He has a God-given right to a simple, beautiful religious experience, from his earliest years of conscious life. It should be a different religious experience at every developing stage of his life, ever richer, deeper, fuller. To guide him through a vital and appropriate experience of God and Christian living, throughout childhood and youth to maturity is the supreme privilege of the church school.

Historians of religious education rightly call 1847 the turning point in the history of religion when modern religious education was born. The new chapter began with Horace Bushnell's epoch-making book, *Christian Nurture*, which challenged the ancient heresy that a child had no normal characteristic religious life of his own but must manifest the religious experiences of pious adults, including an emotional conversion of the cataclysmic sort, or else be considered irreligious. Bushnell's theory of a natural, gradual development of the religious life in children through Christian culture has for nearly a century been slowly winning its way and unquestionably holds the future. Perhaps it is the gradual acceptance of this principle, supported by the plans of educational evangelism mentioned in our last

chapter, which has lowered the "conversion curve" fully two years in the past generation with a correspondingly earlier average age for assuming church membership. Instead of waiting for an emotional conversion at fifteen or sixteen, children now join the church at eleven to thirteen because they have been naturally and gradually brought to the point of personal commitment by the process of Christian nurture.

What the New Social Emphasis Has Done

At this point it is important to notice how our aims in religious education have been broadened by the new social spirit which this generation has brought into both education and religion. The meaning of Jesus' doctrine of the kingdom of God has been appreciated as never before. Christianity is a social religion, but many generations did not realize it. In progressive religion to-day there is a social idealism which brings the vigorous practical teachings of Jesus to bear upon all human relations, that the brotherly world of God's good will may speedily come. No longer is the goal of preaching merely the saving of individuals out of the moral wreck of this world for the future bliss of a far-away heaven. Christian faith is strong enough to-day to claim this world for Christ and to believe that his ideals of living will ultimately win right here, and his kingdom come on earth, as his own courageous faith taught us to pray.

Opposition to the social gospel has been very sincere, on the part of some earnest people who fear it means the displacing of spiritual religion by the mechanics of a social-service program. "Do not

dilute your evangelism with social service" is their earnest warning. Social service may be *a* social gospel. It is not *the* social gospel. We certainly should not substitute the new social emphasis for the old spiritual purpose, for we need both. It is not necessary or wise to preach and teach the social gospel as if it were a new or another gospel. Let us simply teach that *the gospel is social.* It simply means that Jesus has a message of brotherhood as well as fatherhood and saviourhood; that his teachings must apply in all human relations, and as fast as they actually prevail among men, God's kingdom will come. Who can deny this and be Christian?

The Social Trend in Education

Meanwhile modern education as well as religion has also become strongly social in recent years. "A sound mind in a sound body" is no longer the adequate goal of education. The educated person must become socially efficient as well as personally efficient. Under Dewey's leadership this social trend has revolutionized American schools. We now endeavor to train our boys and girls specifically to be useful members of society. They are taught to co-operate with others in the family, the state, the school, the club, the church, and in business and all social relations. Education, therefore, has become a social process of living in the community life of the school. It is the sharing of experience, under expert guidance; and this experience is largely social.

Progressive leaders both of education and religious education have thus come to agree that it is not enough to aim at the complete development of

the individual as the goal of education. Personal efficiency without training for social living is often dangerous. At least two of the three assassins who killed our martyred Presidents were educated men. The social welfare demands social efficiency in education. A few years ago our religious educators carried this logic still further, into the moral and spiritual realm. "Granted this social idealism," says Coe, "the aim of Christian education becomes this: Growth of the young toward and into mature and efficient devotion to the democracy of God and happy self-realization therein."[1]

Building the Beloved Community

As Jesus' plan of redemption included the redemption of society, we must teach our children and youth how to live in "the Beloved Community." We must teach them how to standardize their social conduct as well as their growing character by the ideals of Jesus. Perhaps the reason we of the older generation have been so lacking in social justice, in altruism, in social righteousness and in the application of the Golden Rule to business and politics, is because the religious training of our childhood was too individual. Its aim was too selfishly personal. It lacked the social emphasis. Our children must be taught to do better than we and our fathers have done. For this reason we are trying to make their religious education *a process of learning Christlike ideals, motives and habits, through training in worship, world-friendship, social living and service, under the inspiration of the Bible seers and all great*

[1] Coe, G. A., *A Social Theory of Religious Education.* Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

teachers. The broad aim of "social education" is splendid, but it is not enough. It must be spiritualized. It must be religiously motivated to be morally efficient. For we must not forget that, after all, *religious education is just education in religion*, learning to live with our fellows religiously. More of this in our next chapter.

Socialized Methods of Religious Teaching

The social emphasis in education has brought with it new and revolutionary methods of teaching. In all grades of the public schools we have the socialized recitation and the problem-project method. The class hour is no longer a practice drill or a theoretical exercise, but actual experience in practical living. Modern arithmetics contain no "examples" to be worked out by rule. They are full of real problems, life-situations which are to be solved as tests of real living. There is a reality to them, a continual contact with practical life, which the old arithmetics never possessed.

Likewise our modern church schools are teaching religion as shared experience. We are not simply spraying the children with ideas. There is, of course, a body of fruitful knowledge, practical religious wisdom, which we share with them, as a priceless spiritual tradition; but this content of instruction is illumined by vivid appeal to imagination and is taught as concretely as possible. We well know that children learn most surely by doing, not by sitting still and listening, as we used to expect them to do. We therefore secure their active participation in the learning process in every possible way. We do not provide "busy work" for their restless

fingers, and "expressional activities" just for exercise. We try to make all the units of instruction units of real experience, that are purposive and valuable in themselves, to develop clearer thinking, finer appreciations, right attitudes and loyalties, and actual practice in living the Jesus way.

Our recent educational progress has then surely convinced us that the aim and purpose which was hailed but a few years ago as modern pedagogical orthodoxy is quite inadequate after all. It is not enough to develop the personal capacity of the pupil. It is not sufficient to study the growing needs of childhood and youth through the passing epochs of experience, and secure the normal development of the growing person, physically, mentally, spiritually. All this is vitally essential, but it reaches its climax, its testing and its fulfillment in the social relations of life. Not merely this, but it is only through the social contacts and social experiences that the personal powers are most naturally and effectively developed. Our educational purpose and method must be made thoroughly and consistently social. But in discovering this great truth, have we at last reached our ultimate goal in our search for *purpose* in teaching religion? This is the problem of our next chapter.

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VII

THE TRUE SOCIAL GOAL: CHRISTIANIZING THE COMMUNITY

It was quite natural that the educational groping of past centuries should stress partial and one-sided aims, for all education then was feeling its way to efficiency. Our historical survey of religious education, though exceedingly limited in scope, has discovered several important aims. They are all worthy aims, and still in a measure challenge our attention; but not one of them is so all-important as to monopolize it. Narrowness of aim was the chief error of the past in this movement. This warns us to make our modern aim eclectic and sufficiently broad. Every great educational purpose, like every great doctrine of the church, has won acceptance and prominence only through trial and experiment. It stood the test of experience in serving the needs of humanity at some time or other in the great adventure of living. So it must have had some reality, some practical usefulness. This is why we have found in all the aims discussed in these brief chapters some real value. Not one of them should be discarded, or wholly disregarded, in the formulating of our working aim to-day.

Combining and Focusing Our Working Aims

These various purposes of religious education vary greatly in value and present importance, so our

problem is partly a matter of proportion and relative emphasis. We shall always have an *institutional aim*, an ecclesiastical purpose. We shall teach our children loyalty to the church as the society of the friends of Jesus, sworn to perpetuate his ideals; yet maintaining the church is not our supreme aim, for the church is but a means to an end—the kingdom of God. We shall also have a *scriptural aim*. We shall teach the Bible as the world's greatest source-book of religion, of spiritual inspiration, and of our knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; but we found Bible-teaching too only a means, not an ultimate end in itself.

We shall continue to have an *evangelistic aim*, less prominently than in the past, for this too is a partial aim, a part of a broader purpose. We shall stimulate a normal religious life at every stage of religious development, as well as the supreme choice in personal commitment to Christ. Our aim shall certainly be *pupil-centered*, for boys and girls are more important than institutions, materials, curricula, or methods. We shall plan our programs, choose our lesson courses, select our projects with our pupils' personal needs always in mind. Nothing else is sacred. Yet we found that it is not enough to follow this personal aim, for our purpose must also be *social*. We shall organize our church school as a religious community whose normal activities and projects shall be used to educate our pupils by actual experience in the adventure of social living.

There are modern educators who find the social aim the ultimate goal of complete education. Social efficiency and adjustment to environment for the building of democracy satisfies their educational

ideals. But challenging as this aim is, it is not enough for the Church of Christ, if in any respect its spirit and motives fall short of the ideals of the Master. Our supreme purpose must be *spiritual*, else social efficiency will be a delusion, and democracy will never be safe for the world. But we must make sure that our spiritual aim is broad enough to include the whole of life. Combining all these six objectives, then, in due proportion, we are ready for a statement of our purpose in teaching religion, and a new definition of our movement:

Religious Education is the art and the process of spiritualizing all human life, personal and social, through sharing progressively with growing lives the best Christian experience of the ages, to produce Christ-like characters and communities, and perfect the kingdom of God's good will.

Spiritual Motives Are Indispensable

The three chief processes in religious education are idealization, habituation, and motivation. All are essential, but the power is in the motivation. Without the motive power of religious loyalty, ideals lack dynamic and often fail to control conduct. Family pride, patriotism, loyalty to friends are all strong motives to help us control impulses which would lead us astray. Loyalty to institutions and the standards of our social groups is often powerful, but quite often not powerful enough. Religious motives are higher and more lasting than them all.

Ethical teaching which is not based on religious sanctions has a superficial foundation. The usual result, without religious motivation, is merely pru-

dential ethics—doing right because it pays! There is no lasting power, no moral insurance, in such a selfish motive. Yet what better basis have the people who are projecting a system of "social education" without religion? If they hope thus to make religious education unnecessary, they are on a false trail. Their scheme may be mechanically perfect in its ethical principles; but there is no lifting power or saving grace in any code of ethics. A code only influences our ethical opinions, our thinking *about* ethics. It has little or no effect upon our conduct. Those who advocate such a system should ponder Ellwood's warning, "A religionless world would be a social world of uncertainties, destitute of enthusiasm and of vision, reduced to the dead level of individual expediency. It would be a world in which neither harmony nor good will could long prevail."[1] Education for complete living cannot leave out religion, for life without religion is sadly incomplete.

Moralists who trust in the effectiveness of social education as a substitute for religious education depend for their technic chiefly upon habituation. They take little stock in ideals and pay comparatively little attention to motives. They pride themselves on being "realists." They build up a technic of good habits in the lives of the boys and girls they endeavor to train for life. They hope to get habits of honesty and truth-telling into the lives of our youth by sheer ethical practice. But just what happens when a boy with no compelling religious loyalty suddenly discovers big profits in

[1] Ellwood, C. A., *The Reconstruction of Religion.* Reprinted by permission of the Macmillan Company.

being safely dishonest? Will the fact that he has never before been dishonest insure his honesty now? Will his habit of honesty, drilled into his brain-paths by ethical training supported only by prudential reasons, save him from graft or theft now?

Mechanical Habits Do Not Make Character

Of course it is vital for that boy to be made morally stronger by frequent rehearsals of right actions. The deeper into the brain-paths these grooves of habit cut, the less likely that boy is to fall before temptation. But is the *mechanism* all there is to character? Or does the mechanism fail to track when the motives that caused it fail to motivate? If a boy keeps straight, and forms habits of honest living, not for religious motives at all, but because of his mother's strong influence over him, what happens when that mother dies? What motive power now supports those habits? Is the simple mechanism enough?

If a teller in a bank maintains unimpeachable honesty for ten years under the eye of a cashier of strong character whose good opinion he values, but from no higher motive, what will happen when that cashier is promoted to the presidency of a distant bank? Will the habit which was largely due to external influence long survive the removal of that influence? Does the habit-mechanism alone insure character? The saddest of all tests, as many of us realize, is the *incognito* test. The writer has proposed to several hundred boys the searching question, "Are you more likely to do wrong things if you are sure not to be found out?" Practically all boys over fourteen confess "Yes." One sagely an-

swered, "Sure, any one is. The temptation would be greater." When away from home and the customary social restraints of friends and neighbors, what becomes of good habits? Under what circumstances do they hold steadfast? Does it not all depend upon the motivation of those habits? Does the mechanism of mere habituation, apart from the motives involved, really spell character?

Sharp has a positive answer to these questions:

"What starts the habit? If fear of punishment, or the desire for the approbation of the teacher or parent, or some other motive equally external to character, the results are of no great value. . . . We are trying to develop character, yet all we are actually doing is to start a habit of reacting to the fear of penalty or to the shrinking from disapproval, motives which are valuable enough in their place, but do not represent character."[2]

The same good authority bears witness to the fact that good habits do not last long if they lack strong motivation from within: "The members of the athletic teams of our high schools are not allowed to smoke during the training season. Do they, or do they not, return to their smoking after they have 'broken training'? Our high-school principals have but one answer. Habits of promptness, neatness, order, etc., are fairly well enforced in our American schools. Do business men who employ the boys fresh from the school find these qualities ingrained in them? So far from it that there are constant complaints of their absence. I have had occasion to observe the effects of the

[2] Sharp, *Education of Character*. Reprinted by permission of The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

training given by military schools, after their pupils have become students at the university. In the majority of cases—not all—a year is sufficient to remove all traces of the training so carefully enforced in such matters as order and neatness.

"Suppose the graduate of such a school has been taught in this external fashion, both at school and at home, to tell the truth. He enters the employment of a man who orders him to lie to his customers. The penalty for refusal is dismissal. If the position is a promising one, how long will the opposition of a merely mechanically acquired habit like this last? Evidently, when a young man leaves school he must go forth equipped, *not merely with habits*, but also with so profound a sense of the importance of the modes of conduct which they represent that he will value them more highly than what he may lose by his loyalty to them."[3]

Moral Ideals Are Not Sufficient

Doctor Sharp's logic in the above argument is so clear and convincing we should like to agree with him throughout his excellent book. His logic does not seem to go far enough, but so far as it goes, we heartily agree. His conclusion is, "If the habit is to stand the test of time, the channel must be made by the *ideal.* From every point of view then, the purpose of moral education can be nothing less than fostering the growth of moral ideals, and supplying favorable conditions for the creation and preservation of the habit of obeying them." That

[3] Sharp, *Education of Character.* Reprinted by permission of The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

is, good habits, to be safely permanent, must have moral ideals back of them. But why stop with *moral* ideals? His own logic would compel us to seek the highest ideals and motives attainable, to make habits stand the test of time. Moral ideals which lack a high religious motive and loyalty are not a safe dependence for noble character. It is a noteworthy fact that Doctor Sharp's book, one of the best outlines of a nonreligious system of ethics, does not contain the word "religion," and only refers a few times to the church in a hopeless tone of mild criticism! To be sure, habits must have ideals behind them, to stand the test; but ideals likewise must have motive power, spiritual dynamic in them, or they fail to be realized in life. No young man is morally safe and strong unless his rehearsals of right conduct which form good habits are guided and motivated by the blue-prints of his imagination in the form of the ideals of Jesus. With lower ideals or a lesser loyalty, he cannot become proof against sudden temptation; and even then he will sometimes find it hard to conquer.

Imagination Must Be Spiritually Guided

Our youth must be taught to guard his imagination with all caution, for out of it come the consequences of life. We do him irreparable harm if we do not equip him with spiritual motive power to fight his temptations. All teachers of ethics feel the strategic importance of appealing to imagination. They recognize the necessity of furnishing right imagery as a guide to conduct and character, though many of them fail to see that the spiritual ideals are the noblest and most powerful products of imagination,

and loyalty to them furnishes the strongest motive for character.

The Iowa Plan of Character Education, which recently won the $20,000 prize offered by the Character Education Institute at Washington, contains many concrete suggestions which are valuable for teachers who make character the goal of education. Perhaps the finest paragraph in the book is the following description of the moral function of imagination. We find it under the caption: *Furnish the Mind Richly With Symbols of Right Living.*

"Conduct moves surely in the direction of the dominant imagery. Its mental pictures are its pillar of cloud and pillar of fire. See that the mind of every child is attracted to the best pieces of art; is entangled in the plot of wholesome novels, plays, and movies; is resonant with proverbs, poetry, precepts, and wise sayings; is vibrant with the rhythm and melody of the best music; is inspired with admiration of great personalities; and is self-hypnotized by the thought of noble deeds. Every false brooding is a link in a prisoner's chain or the stone of a prison wall. A clean imagination is a true deliverer. An ideal is a conscious image made personal."[4]

What a pity that this beautiful, really eloquent appeal stops short of its natural climax, the *religious* ideal! Possibly the terms of the prize-contest, on the basis of nonreligious ethics, made this impossible. At any rate, the authors, near the end of the book, show their sympathy with religious education and appeal frankly to the church to co-operate in

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[4] Starbuck, *et al.*, *Character Education Methods, The Iowa Plan.*

this great work of moral training. Religious education needs to master the fine technic of these modern students of moral education; but it is equally clear that this technic must add spiritual motivation to make its ideals adequate. The selection and testing of ideals of living is the most serious task of youth. Many of them realize this fact and are grateful for wise guidance and help in their problem. If the love of Christ is really in the heart of youth, the Christ ideal, concrete, personalized, powerful, will dominate his imagination, control his imagery, and motivate his conduct. There is no other sure basis for Christian character. There is no safe substitute for spiritual motives. This is a main objective in our modern purpose—the spiritualizing of life.

Our Goal: Christianizing the Community

But the modern aim of religious education does not stop with the individual. We must spiritualize the community in all its relationships and social groupings. In this age of interdependence we recognize the need of a social conscience as well as an individual conscience. Our religious education is not complete until our school groups have Christian social ideals and a group conscience to enforce them; and until our playground groups learn how to apply the Golden Rule in a really Christian sportsmanship; and until our clubs, our workshop groups, our corporations and our political organizations learn to do the same. Our civilization's complexity has outstripped its spirituality, just because we have not learned to project our individual Christian standards into our complex social groupings.

As the saintly Rauschenbusch taught us in his *Theology for the Social Gospel*, our "superpersonal forces" remain very largely pagan. The supreme task of the generation is to Christianize them, a truly herculean undertaking.

A part of the program of religious education, then, in every community should be to furnish motive power for all the social forces and factors which have a share in the making of character—the home, school, workshop, playground, theater, library, friendship groups, social clubs, Christian associations, social clubs, business and political organizations. It is a challenging task really to spiritualize a community, even one that is nominally Christian. In proportion as we succeed, we are bringing in the kingdom of heaven in that place. The great opportunity of adult classes and discussion forums in our churches is to attack this community problem vigorously and apply to it the spiritual vision and moral dynamic of religion. We do not need to make war drums or reform trumpets of our pulpits. Let the quieter methods of religious education function through groups of consecrated and fearless men and women who are determined to make their community Christian, by setting up high ideals in the effective social groups in the spirit of the Christ.

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VIII

HUMANIZING LIFE BY JESUS' GOLDEN RULE

Our study of the historic aims of religious education brought us to the conclusion that the ultimate aim is the spiritualizing of life, the Christianizing of the community. At once we found it necessary to give the broadest *social* scope to this spiritual purpose. Christianity is a failure if it produces only independent saints. The kingdom of heaven was Christ's great goal. The brotherly world of God's good will must be ours. How can we prove that our purpose to spiritualize life has succeeded? Only by pointing to a more Christian community. It must be more than orthodox in faith and punctilious in ritual. It must be growing more kind, unselfish, honest and brotherly, with more social justice and fair play. That is, our spiritual purpose in teaching religion must be effectively demonstrated by the way we Christians apply the Golden Rule in everyday human relations.

We must consider next the challenge our teaching program meets in this problem of humanizing life by kindness and fair play. Jesus seems to have banked everything on the strategy of kindness and the omnipotence of love. At the heart of his whole system of practical ideals is this simple yet subtle principle which all the world calls the Golden Rule. Evidently, he believed in it with all his soul, and

expected it to prevail. If the Golden Rule fails, Jesus Christ fails. He has offered us no substitute for it as a general rule for all social living. Even a brief study of purpose in Christian education could not possibly leave out of consideration this central principle in the social teachings of our Master.

Will the Golden Rule Work To-day?

The true optimist to-day is the person with faith enough to believe that the Golden Rule, with the dynamic of the cross, will bring into this world the golden age of peace and brotherhood. There are two great forces in the Christian religion: the spiritual force of the Cross of Christ, and the social force of the Golden Rule of Christ. It is taking both of these to bring the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

There has always been doubt in many minds as to whether the Golden Rule is practical. Many call it merely sentimental. It has been classed with the sanctified moonshine of the "theoretically true but practically impossible." However, with an increasingly social Christian consciousness, our age, our recent decade in fact, gives growing evidence of the practicability of the Golden Rule. Possibly Jesus made no blunder, after all, in this great outstanding teaching!

Unique in Jesus' Religion

This challenging principle of Jesus is the unique factor in his religion. Buddhism has no Golden Rule. Mohammedanism has no Golden Rule. Shintoism has none, nor Hinduism, nor Parseeism. Confucianism, to be sure, has it in negative form.

Even the Old Testament of the Jews lacks it. Though Leviticus and Deuteronomy furnished him the law of love, where did Jesus get the Golden Rule? It is his. At the heart of Christianity alone among the world's religions do we find enshrined this wonderful ethical principle: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7. 12). Or, to condense it into terse modern English: "*Treat others as you would have them treat you.*" What greater nine-word telegram has ever been sent to men to guide their conduct?

It is interesting to notice Jesus' own estimate, that this rule of action summed up the whole law and the prophets; and still more significant that he added this estimate to only one other sentence in all his recorded teachings, namely, his twofold law of love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and . . . thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22. 37). Now, two things equal to a third thing are equal to each other. There must be an especially close connection in Jesus' mind between the law of love and the Golden Rule. One says the Christian must live a life of good will. The other says the Christian must live a life of fair play. The relation is clear. The law of love is simply the Golden Rule in terms of emotion, and the Golden Rule is the law of love in terms of volition, action. The one is motive, the other is method. Both are necessary phases of the central principle of the religion which Jesus taught and practiced. If he had merely taught the world the law of love, Christian duty would have been rather hazy and indefinite; but the Golden Rule

concisely answers the question, How? It gives the clew to method.

Is the Golden Rule Tarnished?

But, granting that it is a beautiful teaching, a pretty bit of idealism, will it really work to-day? Or must Christians confess that their Golden Rule is tarnished and out of date? We have heard business men say: "The Golden Rule may be all right in the home, but it would put me out of business in six months. Business is not benevolence; it is a competitive struggle. I am not in business for my health." Similarly, politicians say: "The Golden Rule belongs in the home, not in politics. The state must be run by law and force, not by sentiment." And diplomats are inclined to say: "The Golden Rule is good in the home, but surely it will not work in international affairs. It might make us join the League of Nations! Why, we would lose our sovereignty, our liberty." And now some people try to convince us that the Golden Rule does not work even in the home, "for it makes a drudge and a slave of the one member of the household who sacrifices for all the rest." Are we forced to admit that it is only an unattainable ideal, not practicable until human nature is vastly changed—possibly in some future world? By no means. Jesus was not mistaken in his faith in humanity, nor in his estimate of justice. The Golden Rule is eternally right because it is everlastingly fair; and what is right is somehow possible.

The Brazen Rule and the Tinsel Rule

Yet one can sympathize with the business man

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who fears that this dangerously benevolent rule would cost him all his profits, when it is discovered that they frequently misunderstand what is really meant by it. Many assume that the Golden Rule means, "Treat others exactly as they think they deserve." But Jesus never taught this. It would be very unjust. Such a rule would put the business man at the mercy of selfish employees and unscrupulous customers. If they alone should decide what was right for him, it would make him their slave. Such a rule of action should be called the Brazen Rule!

On the other hand, we have known a business man to claim that he is running his business by the Golden Rule, when he is really translating it thus: "I treat others just as well as I think they deserve." This sounds a little like the rule of Jesus, but it is not. It is pure tinsel. If you claim the right to determine what other folks deserve, you are living by the Tinsel Rule. You make others your slaves when you let your own self-interest and bias determine the rights of your neighbors. The rules of brass and tinsel have only one viewpoint; the strategy of the Golden Rule requires two—your present point of view and your viewpoint if you were in your neighbor's place. Imagination easily furnishes us this, and this is all the Golden Rule expects of us. But if practiced with the motive of love, it is enough to revolutionize the world and bring in the era of good will. In fact, the strategy of Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom is simply carrying the social ethics of the Christian family into all the larger relationships of life, in society, business, and politics.

Humanizing Modern Business

Modern business men are not all Knights of the Golden Fleece, as is sometimes lightly assumed. Thousands of them are the soul of fair dealing, honesty and reliability, because they have learned to apply this rule of Christ. There is far less misrepresentation, graft, secret rebating, and unfair competition than formerly. Many have accepted that first principle of Rotary: "He profits most who serves best," which the Rotary Club got straight from the Gospels.

There was real civil war in Colorado in the summer of 1914. There were regiments of the United States troops guarding the property of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, and both strikers and soldiers were shot down that summer, and even defenseless women. But there has been peace in those coal fields ever since. Some miracle must have happened? Yes, it was the miracle of the Golden Rule. The Christian president of that industry spent three months discovering the causes of that bitter strike. He went down into every mine to discover working conditions first-hand. He visited hundreds of miners' homes, talked over their grievances with them, listened to their wives and children, their ministers and priests. He hired an expert in social science to make a careful survey and recommend reorganization. The business was thoroughly humanized. Shop committees were introduced, in which employees and management settle the vital matters of business and housing conditions, conciliation, and recreation; and there has not been a strike in that industry since. The Golden Rule reigns. Essentially the same thing in

greater or less degree has been accomplished during the past decade in hundreds of industries in this country. There are plenty of abuses still in the world of industry, notably in other coal fields where other rules prevail; but it is well to note that the Golden Rule has made great progress in the humanizing of American business.

Does It Work in Politics?

When, in the midst of the oil-scandal discussions in the United States Senate a few years ago, the Republican leader made a brilliant defense of President Coolidge, every one knew the latter was innocent of the slightest "taint of oil." The scandal never touched him. But it was extremely embarrassing for the Senate leader to be reminded very scathingly, by a colleague of the opposite party, of the unsportsmanlike way in which President Wilson's very bed-chamber had once been assaulted, to ascertain whether he was too ill to stay in office. Even in politics, nothing but the Golden Rule really pays. It paid wonderfully in China, when two decades or longer ago, the embargo against American-made goods was suddenly removed, when American gifts of food, money, and clothing came to relieve the suffering in famine-stricken provinces. Both battleships and diplomats had argued the case in vain; but what the iron rule of force and strategy failed to accomplish, the Golden Rule of kindness succeeded in doing at once. What a pity we cannot remember always that a question is never settled until it is settled fairly! What is it which makes the Golden Rule so effective? It is the motive of good will which it expresses and puts

into action. Favors to others just to get favors in return are merely selfish deals. They settle no issue and win no one's heart. But the honest facing of our brother's rights, when we live the Golden Rule in Christ's spirit of love and good will, brings the reign of God's justice just one step nearer, for our brotherly spirit breaks down all barriers in our brother's heart. The old Indian chief was right when he said, "If only the Great Spirit who made man should put into man a new heart, this Golden Rule of yours would be quite possible, but only then." He was keen enough to see that the Golden Rule has no power to execute itself. There is nothing automatic about it. It has no self-starter. Like every other rule, or abstract precept or code of ethics, the Golden Rule must have motive power to put it into operation. Hence Jesus' emphasis on the twofold law of love, the emotional side of the Golden Rule which gives it motivation.

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IX

SPIRITUALIZING OUR PATRIOTISM

We have been discussing the fact that the effectiveness of our teaching of religion is demonstrated by the way the life of the community manifests the ideals of Jesus, especially his central social principle the Golden Rule. Is the life of good will actually lived and practiced there? Then our spiritual purpose is evidently sincere, so far as our own neighborhood is concerned, but our responsibility does not end there. The same test holds true in the larger community, in the life of the nation. It is not a simple task to Christianize a state. Too long the old pagan heresy debased our patriotism, flamboyantly proclaimed in Decatur's toast: "My country, may she always be right. But, right or wrong, My Country!" Our purpose in teaching religion must include the difficult task of spiritualizing our patriotism, redeeming it from the narrow nationalism which breeds suspicion, national selfishness, militarism, and war. We are still far from the goal. Let us discover what is involved in this great challenge to religious education.

Patriotism is a poor substitute for religion, but there is religious value in all true patriotism. Religion is the practice of loyalty, and loyalty to country is part of it. To be sure, burning incense before an emperor's shrine in Rome, Peking, or

Tokyo was futile religion and foolish patriotism, but equally foolish is a "one-hundred-per-cent Americanism" that boasts of our national glory while selfishly shirking our world responsibilities.

Wise teachers well know the mighty pull of patriotism on the hearts of early youth and its deepening effect upon growing character. The civic and patriotic motives are real character-builders. The flag ritual, with its pledge of allegiance and cheers for "Old Glory," loses its grip as childhood passes; but American history has teaching values with which a discerning teacher can inspire the heart of youth with truly Christian patriotism. The great prophets like Isaiah and Moses and even Oliver Cromwell skillfully made the religious and patriotic sentiments re-enforce each other.

God's Hand in History

An Anglo-Saxon may well believe the claim of Ezekiel (21. 26) that God has had a powerful hand in human history, uncrowning kings and overturning dynasties. Surely, God's providence was at Runnymede in 1215, when our fathers forced from King John the Great Charter that laid the foundation of our liberties. The throbbing heart of history is the long human struggle for civil rights and religious freedom. God's hand has been in all this from the beginning. Only blind readers of history fail to see in it the oncoming strides of the democracy of God, as gradually the divine purpose and goal is gained: a self-controlled man in a self-governed state. Human progress is the will of God. How eloquently the Liberty Bell's inscrip-

tion peals forth God's own message, "Proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof"! (Lev. 25. 10.)

We may see the hand of God rescuing his people from Sennacherib (2 Kings 19); and saving civilization from the barbarian hordes in 480 B. C., when the little Greek fleet routed the Persian navy of a thousand ships; but his providence appears just as truly in the crucial times of our own history. What turned the course of Columbus on his first voyage of discovery? Had he continued due west as he intended he would have annexed our continent to Spain. It was the sudden flight of a flock of sea gulls that deflected his course southwest toward the Bahamas and saved North America from the curse of Spanish misrule. Who sent those sea gulls? Doubtless the same providence that saved England in 1588 from the Spanish Armada, the most powerful fleet that had yet been built. England with her tiny navy was apparently helpless, but Queen Elizabeth proclaimed that July Sunday a day of prayer for all her people, and somehow God's hand was with them. Though it was midsummer, two ocean storms met over those proud ships of Spain and drove them in the teeth of a terrible gale, scattering the wrecks along the rocky coast as far as the north of Scotland—and Protestant England was miraculously saved. Just a happy coincidence? Perhaps it was God's will. At least we find that awestruck England solemnly gave thanks to God.

After Gettysburg and Vicksburg, when the crisis of our Civil War was safely passed, our beloved Lincoln did the same. Believing firmly in Divine Providence, he proclaimed our first national Thanks-

giving Day in that memorable fall of '63. New England, for seven generations before that date, had reverently observed this annual thanksgiving, like the Passover of the Jews, in memory of God's goodness in that first dread winter of the Plymouth colony. Our devout forefathers believed in the providence of God. Our fathers at every crisis in our history have given thanks to God for his unfailing protection.

The Heroic Challenge of Great Souls

Our teachers can find an endless source of inspiration for American boys and girls in the pages of biography. Even Saint Paul's great list of heroes of the Hebrew race could at least be equaled by studying the annals of our Anglo-Saxon people. By faith King Alfred led the Saxons forth from barbarism. By faith John Wycliffe became "the morning star of the Reformation." By faith Tyndale gave the English people a Bible they could read, though it cost his life-blood. By faith Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, and the rest joined the noble army of the martyrs.

By faith Oliver Cromwell led his praying Puritans to victory, while Milton the seer taught their hearts to sing. By faith John Robinson led his exile band to Holland, and by faith Bradford led them once again to Plymouth, to find a "faith's pure shrine" and found a Christian country. By faith John Wesley and his brother in dark days saved the soul of England.

And what shall I more say? For time will fail me if I tell of Bunyan's light, shining in his dungeon; of Wilberforce and the slaves he freed; of the

Christlike Howard dying as a leper; of Florence Nightingale, blessed among women; of Chinese Gordon, Christian soldier; of Livingstone, knight-errant of the cross; of his missionary compeers, Eliot, Judson, Carey, Moffat, Martyn, Paton, Hannington, Hamlin, Lambuth, and the modern martyr Pitkin —of whom the world was not worthy.

All these died in faith, and none the less our Washington, praying at bitter Valley Forge; and Lincoln, saviour of the Union and the slaves; and McKinley, martyred at his post of duty; and sturdy Roosevelt, great-heart among humans; and Woodrow Wilson, prophet of world-peace. The study of heroic lives brings a silent challenge to youth's latent heroism. It is a mighty stimulus to high thinking and noble living. It fires vivid imagination with a day-dreaming that soon starts the vital process of enthusiastic imitation. Surely American young people do not lack heroes of their own race and nation, and the spirits of these heroes live again a millionfold in each new generation.

America, Land of Opportunity

Surely, God has called our country to a wonderful service of humanity. Other lands now share our claim as lands of the free and homes of the brave, but no land can rival ours as a place of opportunity. Our democracy has many weaknesses. Often our cities are disgracefully misgoverned, and our brazen politicians are gilded with graft. Yet right here the poor boy has the best chance in all the world to rear a royal manhood. Hither have come thousands of persecuted exiles, seeking a refuge and a home. Countless sufferers from civil or religious

tyranny have found here the liberty of which they dreamed. Here millions of seekers for industrial opportunity, crowded out of the lands of their birth, have found the chance to work, to earn a fivefold wage, to own a home, and rear a happy family of useful Americans, though their names may end in "schzlagel," "witz," or "ski." What keeps an ambitious and worthy American down but his own limitations? See the millions of would-be immigrants, waiting on all foreign shores, longing for their turn to come to join the fortunate quota from their country to enter our gates and become at last American citizens. Does it mean nothing to you who are born to this purple that ours is the most coveted citizenship in all the world to-day?

Shall We Be a Christian Nation?

A fortunate nation, indeed, and marvelously prosperous! But woe unto us if we rest content in selfish good fortune. We are in danger of forgetting that mere wealth never yet made a nation great. Despite the high ideals of our founders, we have not always treated our neighbors as a Christian nation should. Our war with Mexico, we cannot deny, was purely selfish—just to gain coveted territory. Cuba and the Philippines were rescued swiftly from a corrupt and despotic government, and we have helped to civilize them. But has there been no imperialism mixed with our benevolence? Our control of Porto Rico and the Canal Zone has brought sanitary living, better education, and decent business; but what about our original selfish policy regarding canal tolls?

And what about China? To be sure, the Chinese

long recognized us as their best friend, despite our rigid exclusion of their nationals. They have not only welcomed our missionaries, teachers, and doctors, but have gratefully appreciated our prompt relief of starving provinces in repeated famines. And when our government returned, in strict honesty, the unexpended balance of the Boxer indemnity, their astonishment soon gave way to grateful confidence in our genuine good will. But when they saw our marines join with soldiers of European nations in Shanghai in resisting the new youth movement of Chinese college students, some of them turned to welcome the Bolshevists of Russia, who claim to be truer friends than we, and our future in China is uncertain.

Meanwhile we have slighted and insulted Japan by the tactless way in which we annulled their "gentleman's agreement" with our new immigration law, which our missionaries have found very difficult to explain as the act of a Christian nation.

America for Peace

It is greatly to our credit that we claimed no punitive indemnity and no conquered territory after the World War. We promised this when we entered the war. But when war was ended, whether wisely or just shrewdly and selfishly, we have stayed out of the League of Nations. Politicians may yet keep us out of the Permanent Court of International Justice. Yet our aid and advice have been repeatedly sought on every great world problem since the war. Our disarmament conference helped reduce the great navies and revived the world's hope for lasting peace. The startling fact that

most great nations owe us many millions of war debt gives us unique power to dictate terms to each capital. If we insist, through the next half century, on collecting this debt, it may cost us more than it is worth. But meanwhile it gives us vast power to prevent war, and we believe in and must stand for peace. Somehow we must help the world to find a way to outlaw war. Our strong navy must be used to keep the peace. This and our more powerful ideals of peace and justice and the grip of our gold upon debtor nations give us triple power that will make it difficult for Europe to start another war. Young Americans should insist that this wonderful power, greater than God ever intrusted before to any people, shall always be used for peace throughout the world.

If Christian ideals should thoroughly control our policy as a nation, there is no limit to the benign influence so powerful a people could exert in the present-day life of the world. It is fair to claim that our foreign policy and our unofficial popular treatment of other peoples in need have usually been Christian, but there have been too many regrettable exceptions. When our Christian purpose is more effectively demonstrated these exceptions will cease. Is it not a pressing need just now to extend our religious education program to include the spiritualizing of patriotism and the teaching of world-friendship? Then the youth of the land will learn that "above all nations is humanity" and that our country achieves its greatest glory in promoting international justice and world peace. Our world-friendship projects in our church schools are very effectively teaching these broader

horizons and right estimates of a nation's greatness and truest opportunity.

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X

WHY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO-DAY?

Our prosperous and comfortable age in America has become dangerously complacent. Some forgotten cynic once remarked, "God takes care of children, fools, and the United States of America!" To-day this "Why-worry?" attitude is increasingly common. It is superficially taken for granted that the future of our Christian civilization need cause us no anxiety. It is strange how little thought Christian people give to the vital question, How is our Christian culture to be perpetuated? There is a prevalent, easy-going faith that civilization is safe because the power of religion is in it, and religion does not easily die.

Many seem to feel that religion is inherited any way, especially in their own family—passed along rather automatically, perhaps organically, from generation to generation. Nothing could be further from the facts. Our children are not born religious, any more than they are born politicians, musicians, or dentists. They are born with a capacity for religion, also for irreligion; which will result, depends upon their training. Both culture and religion are only *socially inherited*, that is, they are taught. They cannot be acquired in any other way.

Religion Can Become a Lost Art

What we call civilization is nothing but a treasure-pile of acquired characters which are al-

ways in danger of being lost through a single generation's failure in social transmission. The "lost arts" were lost only because a single generation failed to teach them to their sons. Roman cement is strong as a rock after twenty centuries; cement walks in Oberlin crack in ten years! Religion has become practically a lost art in many a community. Few intelligent people would claim that the nominally Christian churches in South America or Mexico have much of the spirit of Christ in them. They are essentially pagan, a religion of symbols, ceremonials, and propitiations, quite devoid of spiritual purpose or moral effectiveness. Why? Somewhere between the apostolic age and the present there was a failure in social transmission. The living faith of the fathers was not passed on to the children. Vital religion thus became a lost art.

Likewise in many isolated, neglected American communities a similar thing has happened. In fact, we can see it in process wherever the sources of spiritual vitality and social effectiveness are drying up through neglect of the teaching of religion, and its demonstration in vital Christian living. In these isolated communities for decades past, such education as they have had has been but the teaching of ignorance by ignorance. Both public schools and Sunday schools, where they have them at all, are pitiable makeshifts; and their intermittent pulpit instruction, by untrained itinerants, is nothing but empty exhortation, bolstered up by laborious argument over outworn creeds. If religion is life, its spirit has long since fled. The word describing the situation in such decadent communities is this

ancient warning of the prophet Hosea: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. . . . I also will forget thy children" (Hos. 4. 6). Again, somewhere between the Pilgrim Fathers and the present generation there has been a failure in religious education.

Religious Neglect in Cultured Homes

We must face the grim fact that an essential reversion to type is also going on none the less surely in the spiritual realm when religion is neglected in the midst of culture. Our most dangerous failure in religious education is neither of the South American type nor of the Tennessee mountain type, but of the patrician city type—when children have not become an extinct species there altogether. In such families the children are tenderly nurtured, as a matter of course. A variety of specialists attend to their physical needs, even in anticipation, with every variety of preventive medical care and surgical foresight from orthopedics to orthodontia. Likewise from early childhood their intellectual and social development is most amply provided for by tutors and teachers of various types, including language tutors, music teachers, dancing masters, and riding instructors; and if a new fad appears, there must be a new mentor, be it bridge, the Charleston, or mah jong! In many wealthy homes, to be sure, the same loving care provides for the spiritual nature of the child also, but such is all too frequently not the case.

With all this emphasis on culture and social

amenities and innovations, there is too often a tacit disregard of the fact that the spiritual nature of the child has any need of culture, and sometimes the frank and obstinate denial of this fact. Occasionally one of the family fads is to protect the growing child from being prejudiced by religion in his formative years; as if it were taking an unfair advantage of him to stamp upon his plastic mind and heart a prepossession in favor of his grandfather's faith, before he can defend himself against it and form an independent, unbiased judgment on religious questions himself! This extremely superficial attitude toward religion, that would make it an unimportant elective in life's curriculum, is usually a cloak to conceal or to adorn the family's lazy neglect of religious education. Sometimes it is a personal reaction, with more or less resentment, against the parents' own religious training in early years, which was doubtless responsible for whatever moral character they now possess.

The Moral Danger of Modern Paganism

While such willfully neglectful families may not be numerous, it is unquestionably true that the lazily neglectful are legion. The children of the nation are not being taught religion at home; nor are most of them being taught the religious basis of character anywhere else, in an adequate way. If this be true, with all our boasted culture, which is breathlessly striving to keep up with the increase of wealth in America, we are in grave danger of acquiring a superficial social veneer as a substitute for a Christian civilization, which simply means modern paganism. American paganism is not one

whit safer morally than the paganism of India or Japan to-day or of cultured Greece in the age of Pericles. Without an ethical religion with its moral ideals clarified and made dynamic by spiritual religion, any sort of paganism is a social shell, rotten at heart, whatever be its other sanctions for its social code, be they patriotic, as in Japan; philosophic, as in India; or æsthetic, as in Greece in her glory. In the moral realm there is absolutely no safe substitute for the sanctions of religion. Let us call attention to the fact that somewhere between the religious founders of our New World commonwealth and the adherents of this modern paganism there has been a serious failure to pass on the moral and spiritual values of a Christian civilization.

The Undergirding of Civilization

This makes clear to us what is the unique function of religious education. *It must undergird civilization* and prevent its disintegration into paganism, in reversion to type. Religious values can be conserved and perpetuated only by religious education. If this fails, religion becomes the lost art in many homes and communities, and paganism takes its place; whether cultured or uncultured, it matters little for character.

The responsibility which is borne by our educational system is a very grave one. Civilization, socially inherited from our fathers, must be taught our children. By suggestion and imitation, by demonstration and training, the children of each new generation must be civilized. They are never born civilized nor Christian. Home and school, and church and church school, supplemented in

larger communities by other voluntary agencies, share this vital responsibility. All types of educational institutions are involved in it. They must develop in the plastic minds and characters within their range of influence the intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual powers required for a Christian civilization. This responsibility of the work of education dignifies that work beyond all telling. It is the most important work in life, for the civilized future of the race depends upon it.

That religion has its unavoidable share in this responsibility cannot be denied. Napoleon's attempt to build a great nation without religion was a brief but unsuccessful experiment. The world is watching the Soviet Russian attempt with anxiety and many doubts. In modern Japan the compulsory moral education in public schools, with no religious sanctions and little religious correlation, is failing to produce sound moral character in the rising generation after twenty years' trial. In a class of graduate students last week, including six Japanese of high intelligence and training, all agreed, both Buddhist and Christian, that their system of moral education, to become really effective, must be supplemented in some way by religious ideals and motives.

We can concisely evaluate now the work of religious education as a function in our modern social life. The loss of religion demoralizes a people and disintegrates a nation. The moral foundations of society have never been safely laid except in religious sentiments, convictions, and ideals. Religion is the centripetal force which integrates society and the conservative force which guards its most pre-

cious possessions of idealism and altruism; it is the soul of civilization itself, without which it reverts to crass materialism and a lower type of life. To religious education the supreme task falls, to undergird civilization. It must in every generation develop the spirit in man. It must make religion real to the children of men. It must put religious meaning into the whole of life. To accomplish this it must function through an educational pulpit as well as church school in all its possible correlations. But if religion fails, our civilization goes. The welfare of the world of our grandchildren depends, meanwhile, on our faithfulness to our children.

Our answer to the question, *Why Religious Education?* involving an appeal for a more vigorous attempt to promote an adequate modern program for the teaching of religion, and a deeper realization of its necessity, may be stated in the following paragraphs:

The Modern Challenge of Religious Education

There is no safe basis for democracy except in righteousness, and no sure basis for righteousness except in religion. We fear that an educated people without religion is even more dangerous than an ignorant democracy.

We have in the gospel of Christ a spiritual force which individuals and communities need for their redemption both present and future, for the motivation of sound moral character and for ideals of social efficiency in a real brotherhood. The future of our nation and our Christian civilization depends upon the transmission, from generation to genera-

tion, of this teaching of religion and its moral power. Righteousness is never organically inherited. In each generation it must be taught and its ideals wrought into life.

We have heretofore assured ourselves that religion is a matter of inspiration, and the perpetuation of its moral values safely intrusted to zealous preachers. We now know the perpetuation of religion is a matter of education as well as inspiration, requiring a complete system of religious schools, which shall safeguard our inheritance of the teaching as well as the fervor of the Christian faith and effectively reproduce both in life.

We are convinced that no community has a right to call itself Christian that is not providing for this transmission of the sanctions of religion and its character-making power to the next generation. This requires an effective community program of practical instruction, demonstration, and training, which shall give all the people, especially the children and youth, the moral and spiritual values of our Christian religion.

We therefore venture to assert that although education has become the most costly function of our cities, the work of *religious* education is just as vital a responsibility for any Christian community. It cannot be avoided or shirked, without serious loss of self-respect and positive danger to the community and the commonwealth, for the very character of our civilization is at stake.

We believe this responsibility is a patriotic duty as well as a religious burden, resting not alone upon the church and its devoted ministry but upon every loyal citizen who loves righteousness and has regard

for the moral character of our citizenship and the future of the nation. To such loyal citizens we must therefore make our appeal, trusting that the serious importance of the common task will challenge their co-operative service.

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PART TWO

WHITHER BOUND?

Purpose Analysis of Current Methods

XI

WHITHER BOUND IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION?

Having faced the challenge of religious education, as developed through the centuries, we come now to the fascinating question of the future. The movement of religious education has been recently gaining considerable momentum. Some of us are asking, Whither bound? The speed of the movement seems a little breathless in some of its more radical phases. It is plain to see that modern educational theory, combined with progressive religion, is rapidly changing our practice in church schools. It is well for us to identify these changes and discover the reasons for them. We should adopt none of them without clear understanding of their purpose. Still more radical changes are in the offing, changes that may not prove to be either constructive or desirable.

However, the churches which refuse to keep in line with true educational progress are likely to lose their hold upon their own young people; and a church could hardly make a more serious blunder than knowingly to surrender its youth. Whatever it thinks or does, youth holds the future. It has become a favorite topic of adult criticism, to lament the hopeless decadence of our post-war youth, especially in high schools and colleges. In his recent book on the burning question, *What Ails Our Youth?*

Coe has a dramatic paragraph in which he intimates that the prior question really is what some of the young folks themselves are asking, "What ails our *elders?*"

"'Where is now thy God? We can do without him,' says our self-sufficient, mechanized civilization. 'Where is now thy God? I seize what I desire, and I hold it with my strong right arm,' says special privilege. 'Glory be to the God who visited his people, long, long ago,' sings the church in reply. 'Oh that I knew where I might find him,' sighs the awakening soul of Youth! The deepest skepticism of our times is that which is imbedded in the implication of our customs and institutions—it is the skepticism of maturity, not of youth."[1]

Efficiency or Extinction

To hold the respect of youth, as well as their personal loyalty, our churches must keep up with the modern movement in both education and religion. Evidently, Roger Babson, the famous business expert, does not think they are doing this. So little respect has he for the Sunday school that he apparently thinks it is doomed to speedy extinction. In a recent address in a Massachusetts church he is (perhaps inaccurately) reported to have expressed this opinion, followed by the assertion that all the moral instruction our children need anyway is found in the Ten Commandments, and these in the future will be taught by the public schools! To have the whole program of moral and religious training disposed of in such a cavalier

[1] Coe, *What Ails Our Youth?* Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

fashion is rather disconcerting; yet the church schools may well ponder this efficiency expert's warning. Whither bound? Any institution is bound for extinction that will not adapt itself to changing conditions and meet its present challenge.

Rising standards of educational efficiency will force the churches to stop pretending they are conducting schools, unless they become more purposeful and effective. Various standards of measurement are now available, such as the new *International Standard for the Church School*, by the use of which a church school's efficiency can be objectively tested. Definite ideals are set up, at every important point, by which a school can test its "Learning to live the Christian life, administrative management of pupils, leadership, housing and support, and relationships and correlation," on a 1,000-point scale. Though over-elaborate perhaps, for the average or smaller school, this plan enables a local church school to examine itself to discover the weak points needing special attention, and certainly points the way to future efficiency.[2]

An Expanded Time Schedule

Not long ago it was discovered that the failures of the old-fashioned Sunday school were partly inevitable because they were trying to do the impossible. The allotted time is far too limited. At the rate of an hour's religious teaching on the average thirty-eight Sundays a year, the average boy in all his Sunday-school career gets only the equiv-

[2] Copies of this *International Standard* can be obtained from Dr. Paul H. Vieth, Research Department, International Council of Religious Education, Mallers Building, Chicago, Illinois.

alent of fifteen weeks of day-school education. He is actually in day school as long in a week and a half as he is in Sunday school during an entire year. Yet we imagine we are giving him in those brief hours moral and religious training for a lifetime! No wonder we find that the rising generation breaks down all too frequently under the increasing moral overstrain of life, even in matters of common honesty. When the American Bankers Association found it necessary to employ a leading expert in boy-life to study the problem of how to teach honesty effectively, because the bank losses from theft and defalcation were increasingly alarming, it was a serious arraignment of the Sunday schools of the country. Yet it was their limitations, not their purpose and devotion, that were really at fault.

The moral efficiency of our religious education requires us to expand our time schedule in every feasible way. This will require, wherever possible, the week-day teaching of religion to supplement the meager and crowded Sunday opportunity; and the daily vacation church schools, which have spread so rapidly the last few summers, must find still wider usefulness. In their intensive program in vacation time, religious education really gets the right of way and finds its finest opportunity for work with children. In some communities Sunday afternoon or evening provides another point of expansion and furnishes the best available time for work with the young people. The schedule may be still further expanded by special training courses, pastor's classes, and club meetings for a great variety of expressional activities which often have a high educational value. The church school of the

future will obtain a fairer share of the time of the boys and girls and will have a correspondingly greater influence in their development.

Professional Standards for Teachers

It was a rather appalling revelation, a few years ago, when the Inter-Church World Movement's *Indiana Survey of Religious Education* described the average Sunday-school teacher in that typical State. According to this report, the typical teacher in Indiana church schools is a married woman, thirty-seven years old, with two children of her own, with a family income of $1,474 a year. She has finished three years in high school, but did not graduate. She was reared in a rural home where the income averaged $1,084 annually. Her professional training for religious education was almost negligible—merely a few weeks of local teacher-training. She has taught in Sunday school six and a half years, but almost entirely without supervision. She reads a few books a year, in general literature, but no books or papers in religious education.

Most of the Sunday-school teachers of the State have had no courses in religious education, the Bible, or religion in any institution of higher learning, and about one fourth of them have never even studied in a high school. Only 13 per cent of them have had a fairly adequate professional training as teachers of religion. On the basis of these and many other facts, the investigators concluded: "Compared with the rural public school teachers of Indiana, it may be said that 87.7 per cent of all the Sunday-school teachers of Indiana fall below the lowest

standards which are accepted by the State for rural public-school teachers."[3]

With such teachers how can we expect efficiency? They are earnest, well-meaning souls and often exert a fine spiritual influence in spite of their lack of training. But imagine the day schools submitting to such leadership! We are bound to raise the standards for our church-school teachers to at least as high a level as the requirements for teachers in the public schools. To accept a lower standard is to confess that we regard the work of teaching religion as less important than the task of teaching mathematics or geography. Which is really the more difficult task to do thoroughly well?

Whither bound? Toward salaried, professionally trained teachers in our church school? Already the strong city churches, the leaders among them, are paying modest salaries for church-school teaching, such as the Church of the Covenant in Cleveland, and the First Congregational in Toledo; and this makes possible at once a really professional standard of close supervision and efficiency. But this hardly seems necessary in the average church. It ought to be possible to dignify the opportunity of religious teaching so highly as to secure trained and consecrated teachers still on the voluntary basis. And doubtless in many schools the unpaid teachers have as high ideals of work and are as exacting in their preparation as if they were paid in money as well as in appreciation and personal satisfaction. Trained day-school teachers, or former teachers,

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[3] Athearn, Walter S., *The Indiana Survey of Religious Education*, vol. i, p. 69. Reprinted by permission of George H. Doran Company, publishers.

should consecrate to this highest work of the church their trained talents, the best offering of service they can personally render to Christ.

Efficiency suggests that the church schools should set definite standards of preparation for their teachers and then insist on maintaining them, limiting the number of their classes accordingly. Better to combine three classes under a trained, capable teacher than trust two of these classes to teachers who care so little for the privilege that they will not take the trouble to secure adequate training. We must somehow secure professional teaching standards, whether or not on a salary basis. With the average education of our members now rapidly rising, this is fast becoming possible. America is rapidly becoming a nation of high-school graduates, not to mention the vast increase in college enrollment. If the numerous young college graduates in our churches in towns and cities should devote a share of their time and energies to religious education, instead of majoring in golf and bridge, this problem would soon be solved, so far as the larger churches are concerned.

Better Team-Work With Public Schools

We are surely bound for a better team-work between the church schools and the public-school system. Already the trend is very evident. Many church schools have recently given up the old four-year grading in each department and have adopted the three-year basis, in harmony with the day-school grading. Already the term "intermediate" has given way to "junior high-school department" for grades seven to nine, in towns where there is a

junior high school; and the senior department is now called "senior high-school department" to cover the high-school grades ten to twelve. The term "beginners" will soon give way to "kindergarten" and already has had to do so in schools where the "cradle-rollers" are welcomed in a room of their own, the church nursery.

Many of our difficulties in religious education are due to the embarrassing comparisons with the better equipped day schools with their higher teaching standards and more attractive modern methods. The time has come for us to recognize that the same educational principles, processes, and methods of teaching should apply on Sunday as on Monday, for the educational process is a unit. Does not this suggest that to win the respect of our pupils we must maintain similar standards of work and study, with tests, examinations, grades, reports, and parent-teacher associations, characterizing any real school? These things require tactful caution, but all are possible.

The day school and the church school owe each other mutual respect and a fair division of functions. We must be willing to recognize the possible religiousness of all education by Christian teachers; yet religion as such should not be taught in our tax-supported schools. Week-day classes in Bible study and religion that meet all reasonable requirements of the board of education should be recognized as worthy of public-school credit, and the school authorities should also be willing to co-operate by sharing schedule time for such teaching in the churches. The matter of academic credit is relatively unimportant; in fact, there are some argu-

ments against accepting it. There is every reason to expect that this co-operation will be cordial throughout the country, the movement has already made such satisfactory progress, in spite of local opposition in a few communities.

A Religious Democracy With Pupil Initiative

The day of the Mussolini Sunday-school superintendent and the cheer-leader director of music and the preacher-teacher or lecturer to straight-rowed classes is about over. It will doubtless survive a long while yet in backward communities. But the churches feeling the ground swell of the new youth movement have already made their church schools a religious democracy. Pupil participation will be more and more stressed in all worship programs, activity programs, and the entire curriculum and life of the school as a religious enterprise. It is essentially a religious community, in which all but the youngest children have a voice in the management. Already the organization of departments is quite generally around pupil initiative, with departmental councils, composed of class representatives. These councils are consulted on all possible occasions to determine the policy and plans of the group, and thus the group activities become projects with real educational value for all concerned.

The day of formal teaching by authoritative teachers is already passing, especially in the older grades. Adult guidance will always be necessary because of wider experience, but we are learning that our young folks learn most through their own discoveries, not through listening to our telling. Hence group discussions are fast becoming more

popular and effective than old-fashioned instruction, and the lecture method is in eclipse. In fact, in the high school and young people's departments it is quite likely that classes will soon be called *groups* and teachers will be termed discussion *leaders.* This *furore* for discussion is something of a fad, and under poor leadership gets very thin and fruitless when it is merely the "collaboration of ignorance with ignorance." Yet there is much truth in the radical theory that real education must be self-education. We must not forget, however, that the immature self must have adequate guidance. Certainly the greater amount of active participation we can secure on the part of our older boys and girls, the more rapidly and effectively they will learn and apply the values, facts, and ideals of religion. The clue to success with this difficult age is more pupil initiative, under skillful, self-effacing adult guidance from the rear.

Broad Scope of Purposeful Living

We are rapidly bound for the broadening of our teaching range in religious education to include the entire scope of purposeful living. In fact, the worthfulness of all teaching materials must pass this test. What relation does this have to the present experience of these pupils? We shall cut out everything extraneous to the pupil's experience. Language and concepts they cannot understand will no longer be used. Lists of forgotten kings, who well deserved to be forgotten, will not be forced upon them. We shall not in the future discuss in the primary department "Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?"—as actually happened not

many months ago! Out will go much of the adult experience of the Bible until adult years are reached. We shall use only appropriate teaching materials with direct bearing on the needs and development of the children and youth, and shall make it our chief aim to reconstruct their experience and deepen and spiritualize it, giving it purposeful expression in actual living, through skillful and worth-while projects.

Not Simply Social Education

There are those who prophesy that in the near future the program of "social education" will be so wisely perfected and skillfully promoted that this will take the place of religious education in progressive communities. Then we are no longer to need religious education because social education will equip our children "for complete living"!

Can it be that this is the ultimate goal toward which we are bound? Can it be that we shall no longer look to the church school to inculcate moral ideals of living, because these will be so perfectly taught in the social ethics classes in the public schools? Can it be that the appeal to patriotism, high citizenship, and social loyalties will be made so effectively in the day-school classes in social science that the poor old Sunday school will be complacently allowed to die and be buried unmourned?

Let us hope for great progress in this line in our public schools; but the need of religious education will always remain. After the public day school has done its very utmost there will still remain a lasting need of religious social education which the tax-supported schools can never in free America

supply, except perhaps in perfectly homogeneous communities where all are either Protestants or Catholics or Jews. Ellwood, the peer among sociologists to-day, admits that there are limits beyond which the public schools cannot pass in this matter and that they must continue to look to the church to furnish *religious* social education to see education through. He demonstrates beyond all question that religious education is the effective completion of social education on a higher plane: "It is social education carried to the plane of the ideal and energized by socially idealistic emotional values. It is the only sort of social education which is adequate to meet the crisis which confronts our world, for it is the only sort of education which is adequate to produce social idealism. We must have an intelligent social idealism to meet our problems; and such an idealism can be generated among the masses only through appropriate moral and religious education."[4] Religious education must always complete the educational process by furnishing a higher and more spiritual motivation for character and conduct than public schools can ever consistently furnish, in view of their limitations.

Sharing a Progressive Christian Experience

The church school which efficiently develops this modern program will succeed in giving its children and youth a vital religious experience adapted to their needs and expanding with their capacity to appreciate it. Thus religion will become a normal part of their experience of living, not a separate

[4] Ellwood, C. A., *Christianity and Social Science*, p. 176. Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

section of it, but the vital heart of it from which flows the power to lift life and to energize it with spiritual loyalties and motives.

At each period of their development they will find God, the kind of God they can understand and love. With each passing year they will respond to a carefully graded curriculum of worship, instruction, recreation, and service adapted to their capacity and needs and capable of securing their whole-hearted expression. Growth in personal religion and social usefulness will follow in a natural way as they play their part in the Christian enterprise, of which they are consciously and loyally contributing members. Thus the religious education of the future is bound to produce vital results in the genuine spiritualizing of personal character and of our common life. Whether your church school, any local church school is thither bound, for its successful sharing in the kingdom of the future will depend largely upon its present faithfulness to a really progressive program. It is worth our while in the following chapters to study and see clearly the constructive purpose in some of the newer phases of this program.

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XII

WHY THE NEW CHURCH ARCHITECTURE?

Evidently, something has been happening to our church buildings the past decade or more. In all growing cities since the World War there has been unprecedented building activity, and new church plants have been a notable feature of it. But the new buildings are radically different from the old. Stranger yet, a vast number of churches have remodeled their buildings, as if some restless urge of the life within the structure had forced a new expression of its function. That is exactly what has happened. The structure of a church building is no more fortuitous than the shell of a mollusk. The organism within determines the sort of house it shall live in, in accordance with its needs.

New Ideals of the Church's Function

With the passing generations the church has developed changing ideals of its mission and function, and it has forced itself to change its architecture and equipment in accordance with these changing ideals. To be sure, in backward communities the village church, like the village school, is still a one-celled organism, and its single room makes impossible the modern program of teaching religion, just as the one-room school hinders modern education. In progressive communities, however, we can trace in the changing church architecture several radical steps in the church's evolution within. For in-

stance, the original Broadway Tabernacle in New York City was built for the great evangelistic preacher, Charles G. Finney, nearly a century ago. It was simply a great auditorium, seating four thousand worshipers. It was encircled by galleries and everything focused at the pulpit. When Doctor Finney left for Oberlin College no one else could fill that vast building and it was long used as a storage warehouse. The church replaced it with a different type of building, the usual brick Gothic structure of the period, the chief features of which were a conventional audience room and a smaller "lecture room" for the midweek prayer meeting which was then reaching its climax of popularity. But the third Broadway Tabernacle bears no resemblance to its predecessors. It has the most beautiful and worshipful auditorium of the three, plus a nine-story parish house equipped for a broadly efficient ministry, though it does not claim to be an institutional church. And should a fourth structure be built the coming year, it would doubtless show still further response to the time spirit with its changing ideals of the function of the church, particularly on the educational side.

Rising Standards of Taste

We cannot deny that beauty in architecture is making new demands on American churches. A few generations ago beauty had little in common with Puritan religion in America. Thrift and utility were pious then, but art was not. The Puritans built their original meeting houses on the same lines as their barns. Later structures of the so-called colonial type developed a genuine beauty in

simplicity, but its beauty was chaste and restrained, as if something to be apologized for. Pioneer churches were naturally crude. In many structures each pew-owner built in his own pew, using whatever lumber was convenient! The slow development of artistic taste in America is in nothing more evident than in our church architecture. The average church building erected during the strenuous years of "the winning of the West" reflects the penury and hardship fully as much as the devotion of the builders, and naturally ignores all requirements of beauty.

Roman Catholic churches were a little worse than the average, a generation ago, but their improvement in recent years is remarkable. Many beautiful Catholic churches have been recently erected in the pure Italian style, with graceful *campanile*, doubtless because so many American priests have recently studied in Rome and brought back a refined taste for real architecture. Doubtless the many beautiful Protestant buildings we have built in recent years have owed their architectural beauty, not only to the improved taste of American architects and their European education, but also to the fact that vast numbers of our fellow citizens each year discover in the great art centers of the old world a fresh appreciation of the beautiful and entirely new standards of judging what is really lovely and admirable in form and color. Thus in many a community the ugly and grotesque or cheaply ornate church has been quietly replaced by an appropriate building with ideals of beauty as well as piety. This is a very worthy reason for the new church architecture that must not be overlooked.

New Standards of Efficiency

We should recognize also that our more efficient denominational guidance has greatly helped the local congregation to avoid the inevitable blunders of inexperience in building churches. In the past decade all the great denominations have drawn upon the wisdom of consulting architects and made their experience and skill available to the humblest churches of their order, through the church building society of the denomination. These architects have specialized in the study of ecclesiastical architecture and gradually have supplemented their technical skill by the necessary knowledge of the educational and social program of the modern church. This improvement has been fully as notable in the South as in the North, both the Southern Methodist and Baptist churches showing in recent years the remarkable results of denominational supervision by expert church architects. They have built or rebuilt countless church plants which combine architectural beauty with modern efficiency.

In more recent years the new ideals of church construction and equipment have been very concretely put in schedule form, so that the church plants of a city can be accurately studied and criticized in detail on the basis of a score-card with a 1,000-point standard. This was first attempted in 1919 in the Malden survey under the direction of Dean Walter S. Athearn and later included in the volume of *Measurements and Standards of Religious Education*, reporting the Indiana Survey by the Inter-Church World Movement. Though this plan may be too elaborate for general adoption, it is exceedingly valuable as a statement in detail of

the present ideals for an adequately constructed and completely equipped Protestant church plant. Using this standard, an architect or a church-building committee can criticize every detail of a church blue-print and discover wherein the proposed structure fails to meet the demands of a modern church program. If such a standard could have been used as recently as fifteen years ago, some very beautiful new churches would not be so lacking in modern educational equipment. For instance, a Cleveland church dedicated in 1911 at a cost of over half a million dollars is seriously handicapped by the lack of separate classrooms for its church school of nine hundred members. It is beautiful, but not efficient.

Why the "Akron Plan" Was Discarded

Within living memory the so-called Akron plan of housing the Sunday school was hailed as a great modern achievement. It was the invention of Mr. Lewis Miller for the original use of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Akron, Ohio. Although for a dozen years now it has been discarded by educational leaders as pedagogically impossible, it continues to reappear in modified form in many new churches whose builders failed to discover how rapidly our architectural ideals are changing.

The Akron plan provides an apse-like, semicircular wing for Sunday-school use, usually adjoining the church auditorium in the form of a transept, so as to expand the seating capacity of the church when needed. Separate classrooms were built around the wall of this semicircle, both on the floor and in the gallery above, but all open toward

the center and converging toward the platform as in a theater. For the opening exercises the pupils would fill the center space and sit in the entrances to their classrooms, then retire within for the class-study period. "Togetherness and separateness" were claimed as the great features of the plan and it rapidly gained widespread acceptance.

But the trouble was, there was really no separateness, for the drawn curtain shut out sight but not sound, and we have found the "togetherness" undesirable from an educational viewpoint. It is very difficult to maintain a graded church school in an Akron type plant. Even when the circle is squared, and the awkward shaped rooms are given right angles and the curtain replaced by sliding doors, the cell-like rooms are cramped and noisy, the thin partitions become excellent sounding boards and real teaching is very difficult. Furthermore, the plan was invented to emphasize the superintendent's opportunity as an inspirational leader of assemblies, and now many departmentally graded schools have no general assembly except on special occasions, and some do not even have a superintendent! The director of religious education has quite different duties. There is still occasional demand for a large assembly room for the church school, but the church auditorium can be used for this purpose. The modern ideal of *grading worship* as well as instruction has made the separate room for each department of the church school as necessary as the separate classrooms for class study.

Building Around the Departments

The key to the most recent church architecture

is the educational emphasis on the *department* as the unit of the modern church school. Just as the public-school system has found it most useful to work with groups of three grades each, religious educators have discovered this is the best way to teach religion. Our primary, junior, intermediate (or junior high school), senior high school, and young people's departments each cover three grades and are convenient-sized groups for worship, for social activities, for world-friendship and other teaching projects. This is accentuated by the growing popularity of the new system of "Group Lessons" promoted by the International Council of Religious Education, which small churches find more practicable than the closely graded course and in every way superior to the ungraded, uniform lessons. Just now our church-school enterprise is strongly focused upon departmental organization and activities. Hence the newest church plants build sections, wings, or floors to accommodate the various departments with assembly rooms and adjoining departmental classrooms for each group of three grades, and in the more elaborate plants a beautiful social room with open fireplace and club facilities. Usually, the assembly room is used as the departmental clubroom; and in smaller churches two adjacent departments are grouped about one assembly room.

The Modern Church a Social Center

It is difficult to imagine a kitchen in an Episcopal church in the eighteenth century which even had no chimney; or a stage with complete theatrical appointments in an early Methodist church which

eschewed all worldly amusements; or a motion-picture machine or projector to teach religious art in an old Puritan church in which all religious pictures were avoided as "popish"; or a gymnasium, game room, or bowling-alley in any sort of a church a century ago when play was considered a waste of time and a temptation of Satan! Yet the modern church plant must contain all of these or curtail its program. To be sure, in this day of elaborately equipped million-dollar high schools and Christian Associations for both young men and women, near-by churches find it possible to reduce this physical social equipment; and if they build gymnasiums at all, they are used for free-play games rather than formal gymnastics, for social rather than mainly physical uses.

Only the exceptional community, however, has so complete a social equipment that it does not need the socialized church. In both city and country to-day the church is renewing its life and usefulness through its social program. It is a friendly center of human association and mutual helpfulness for the whole neighborhood. It is just a big, happy, comfortable, interesting *home* for the folks who share its life. More and more the church kitchen and dining room have proved indispensable. In some large churches they serve meals to some group or other practically every night in the winter week. The "regular weekly prayer meeting" has had a real resurrection in the Church-Night plan, which in countless churches begins with a frugal supper for the church family, followed by "family prayers," committee meetings, mission study, rehearsals for dramatics and a great variety of group activities.

And so it has come to pass that our Protestant church architecture, following the expansion of the church's social function and educational opportunity, has found it necessary to build three units in its modern plant, more or less distinct or skillfully combined: a house of worship for its spiritual ministry, a schoolhouse for its educational ministry, and a community house for its social ministry. Happy the church that can build all three and amply equip them for adequate service of the neighborhood. The broader its service the richer its family life and the real religion it demonstrates and shares, provided it never fails to maintain the supremacy of the spiritual in its whole program. That this is perfectly possible is the experience of many churches, happy in their opportunity to enrich and vitalize and Christianize the life of their village or city.

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XIII

WHY A GRADED CURRICULUM?

The problem of what to teach has become the major problem in our church schools. For many years this was no problem at all, for the International Uniform Lessons were used in most churches as a matter of course. Possibly seventy-five per cent of all Sunday schools still use them for one reason or another. They are the cheapest, the most orthodox, the series with most numerous helps for teachers, and the easiest for the pupils. They fit into the old-fashioned type of school which is evangelistic rather than educational, essentially ungraded, and stressing the general assembly rather than departmental worship. The nineteenth-century type of superintendent still clings to the "regular lessons" because they satisfy his own ideals and aims for the Sunday school and give him his chance for a homily on the uniform lesson for the day at the end of the session. But the chief bulwark of this ungraded system is the power of vested interests, the sheer weight of capital invested in the business of producing the old-fashioned lesson helps. The enormous output of a single publisher, it is claimed, goes to sixty thousand Sunday schools weekly. Very likely it is the cheapest "literature" available in the world on any subject. This one argument of cheapness speaks louder in many thrifty churches than any consideration of educational merit or religious value. But in many other

church schools the problem of the curriculum today is a live issue.

The "Babel Period" of Sunday School Lessons

Early attempts at curriculum making in the Sunday school's first half-century in America were naturally rather crude. They were mostly on the interdenominational basis, promoted by the American Sunday School Union whose popular "Bible Question Books" were quite widely used. By about 1840, however, the Sunday school as an institution had gained sufficient recognition to convince religious leaders of its permanence and value. Hitherto it had been largely a laymen's movement, but now the denominational leaders began to discover its possibilities for sectarian promotion. Church publishing houses found it profitable to edit and publish lesson outlines and helps, each denomination developing and circulating its own system, thus safeguarding its doctrines and other interests. The result of this experimenting was so confusing that that quarter-century has been called the Babel period of Sunday-school history! Doubtless it increased the sharply conflicting sectarianism of the day, though this was partly offset by the occasional State and national conventions on an interdenominational basis, which served to remind all Protestants of their essential unity in faith and purpose. But it was a period of slow growth, of disorganization, and meager accomplishment in the religious-education movement.

The Credit Due the Uniform Lessons

Only by recalling this chaotic condition in Amer-

ican Sunday schools at the close of the Civil War can we appreciate the really great service rendered by the Uniform Lesson system when it first appeared in 1872. At the Indianapolis convention of that year, under the vigorous leadership of B. F. Jacobs, of Chicago, the International Association adopted the principle of uniform lessons and appointed its original lesson committee of five members. The leading spirit on this committee was Dr. J. H. Vincent, founder of Chautauqua, who had already inaugurated the Berean lesson series which had gained rather wide acceptance. Though the first cycle of lessons was the result of a compromise, it met with astonishing success at once, and was hailed as a great educational reform. Nearly all denominations adopted it, and within a very few months it had united American Protestantism in the study of the same Bible lesson each Sunday. Whatever may be said of this pedagogically, it gave a subtle inspiration and sudden momentum to the Sunday-school movement everywhere. It proved the real fraternity of the Protestant Sunday schools in spite of sectarian divisions; it unified their aims as definitely as it focused their united study, and in three years the enrollment of the Sunday schools of this country was doubled.

When the international convention met in 1875 it marked a new epoch in American church history. The humble Sunday school, in which ministers at first took little interest, had become a major function of the Protestant churches and the first agency which had effectually united them. The movement had become a world movement, and chiefly through the agency of the Uniform Lessons. The enthu-

siasm of the historian of the day over this fact is evident in this passage from his record:

"These Lessons are largely in use throughout our own land by Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Moravians, Friends, members of the Reformed Churches, Adventists, and many others—a mighty host, to be enumerated only by millions.

"Our Lessons have found their way to the Sunday schools along the shores of the Atlantic, down the slopes of the Pacific, and through all the region which lies between. East and West, and North and South, have come to love and use them. . .

"But this is not all. Our work will help to unify the nations. Our Lessons are in use to-day in France and Germany, in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey, Italy, and Greece; in Syria, Hindustan, India, Burmah, and China. Old Mexico is sitting down with us to the study of these Scriptures. The isles too wait for God's law. Australia, New Zealand, and the Sandwich Islands have clasped hands with us across the intervening waters, and it is literally true that one set of Sabbath studies is going with the sun around the globe."[1]

This enthusiastic report was quoted to do full justice to the service rendered by the original international lessons. We must recognize that the Uniform Lesson system has been a powerful unifying influence in the Sunday schools of the world. It has undoubtedly helped the Protestant churches to grow together, as they surely have during the

[1] Quoted in Betts, George H., *The Curriculum of Religious Education*. The Abingdon Press.

past half-century. It has for years focused popular attention on Bible study and has gained vast publicity for religious education through the hundreds of newspapers which print their "weekly notes on the Sunday-school lesson." In spite of its obvious defects, it has been one of the chief factors in the remarkable growth of American Sunday schools; and though educational progress has made it no longer acceptable to progressive leaders in the movement, it is still greatly beloved by many in the ranks. Since the International Graded Lessons were first authorized in 1908, they have gradually displaced the Uniform Lessons; and now the International Lesson Committee promotes three competing series of lessons, the so-called improved-uniform, the closely graded and the group-graded or group lessons.

Principles Violated by Uniform Lessons

In spite of the good they have accomplished, the Uniform Lessons are open to very serious criticism. They embody the outworn educational theories of the middle of the last century. To perpetuate these heresies is pedagogically inexcusable. They have always been material-centered, not pupil-centered—a flagrant fault in any curriculum. They are primarily interested, not in teaching children, but in teaching the Bible. The selection of teaching material has not been determined by the needs of the growing child, but by the desire to get the world to study the entire Bible every eight years. The knowledge-of-the-Bible aim is the supreme objective in the system rather than the spiritualizing of the life of the community. The lessons are not

especially written to secure conduct-response on the part of the pupils, but to insure their belief in the Bible and its doctrines. A rather abnormal estimate of the uniqueness of the Bible and its plenary inspiration has narrowed the field of the curriculum of religious education to this single source, instead of drawing its materials broadly from human experience and all inspirational literature, as other lesson courses have done.

Such objectives do not readily produce a socialized curriculum. They give meager opportunity for project teaching of religion. All too often, probably in a majority of the lessons, there is little human interest for modern boys and girls, so remote are they from present-day living and youthful experience. Little attempt is made in the selection of materials to make these lessons correspond with the interests and activities of the child. They have been all too largely determined by the adult interests of the members of the lesson committee. Can we blame a class of lively American boys for failing to show any interest in a lesson on "Uzziah's Pride and Punishment" or "Jeroboam Leads Israel Into Sin" or "Jehovah Yearns Over Backsliding Israel"? Boys in Chicago or Bucksport in 1927 have no living contact whatsoever with these events in ancient Hebrew history. They wonder why we think them important.

The Pedagogical Cruelty of Ungraded Lessons

But the chief arraignment against the Uniform Lessons is the fact that they are uniform, that is, they are ungraded. No amount of improving can really grade them, for they are founded on the

essential principle of uniformity. What is the logic in teaching children the story of Gethsemane just because we wish to teach it to adults that Sunday? Or on any Sunday, can young children understand the tragic pathos of that story? We should consider an educator insane who might propose that all school children from the primary grades to senior high and junior college, on a given Monday, must study the story of the Battle of Bunker Hill, the binomial theorem and the ablative absolute! Yet this would cause no more perplexity than the Sunday-school lesson for June 6, 1915, on "Nathan Rebukes David for His Sin"; or that lesson on "Malignant Unbelief," which taught the Beelzebub theory of demoniacal possession. In fact, this last story seemed so important to the lesson committee that they made the poor children study it twice in nineteen months! What has demoniacal possession to do with the unfolding of a beautiful childhood experience of God and his loving care?

To force upon young children the lurid picture of the rich man in hell, or the heart-rending narrative of the attempted sacrifice of the child Isaac by his own father, is nothing less than pedagogical cruelty. Even though the boy of eleven may like best the "fightiest parts of the Old Testament," as one of them confessed, younger children are inevitably harmed by such bloody and militaristic lessons as "Cain and Abel," "Benhadad's Defeat Through Drunkenness," "The Death of John the Baptist," "Deborah and Barak Deliver Israel," "Saul Tries to Kill David," "Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah," and "The Destruction of Sodom." These lessons all have their value for the adult

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classes and possibly for young people, but they are thoroughly bad for children.

The psychological effect of such lessons upon small children is ably discussed in a recent English book, particularly in its second chapter, on "The Sacrifice of Isaac," from which we quote the following:

"There is abundant evidence to show that the effect of the story of the sacrifice of Isaac upon the more thoughtful children is the mental impression of a contemplated murder. . . . With increasing cultivation of the imagination in our educational system, the more harmful will be the results of this story when presented to young minds. . . . Because of such training many of the children identify themselves with Isaac when the story is told to them, and for this reason they rebel or are shocked at the procedure. . . . From one of the healthiest and happiest of schools, after the story had been told by one of the gentlest and kindest of teachers, a little boy went home, and in the evening as he sat by the fire wept disconsolately for an hour or more, as he thought over the story of the morning. Others have shown in other ways that the story has done them harm in the mental and spiritual impression it has made, and mothers have asked that their little ones should not be told the story again. . . . Even more to be deplored than the effect of its gruesomeness is the conception of God which the story conveys."

Later he shows the hopeless confusion and inconsistency to which this story brings the child mind:

"'And what was he going to do?'

"'Cut his throat with a knife,' replied a boy.

"'That sounds horrible. Why was he going to do that?'

"'Because God told him to do it,' was the reply. . . . 'Is it right for a man to slay his son?' The majority said 'No,' but one little girl said, 'It is right when God tells you to, but not when Satan tells you.'"[2]

What possible religious value can there be for children in such stories as "The Plagues of Egypt," "Miriam Becomes a Leper," "Balak and Balaam," "The Fall of Jericho," and "The Sin of Moses and Aaron"? Yet the Uniform Lessons have forced these periodically upon even our young children. And how much can children really understand in the mystical lessons on "Jesus the True Vine," "Christ's Teaching to Nicodemus," "The Samaritan Woman at the Well," and "The Holy Spirit and His Work"? In fact, most of the six-months' course in 1917 in the fourth Gospel was quite beyond the children's comprehension; likewise the last quarter in 1914 which covered all the tragic events of passion week.

To be sure, the more careful selection of material, in very recent years, has made these blunders less frequent, but it should require no argument to convince any reasonable person that the same course of lessons cannot possibly be adapted to the needs of both adults and children. If they fit the needs of either group, they cannot serve the other. Our fathers inflicted upon helpless children the doctrinal catechism, which was wholly in a foreign

[2] Grigg-Smith, T., *The Child's Knowledge of God.* Reprinted by permission of The Macmillan Company.

tongue to them, the language of concepts. We have been almost equally inept and cruel in forcing upon children a series of Uniform Lessons which have always best fitted the religious needs and experience of grown people. And so we must conclude that although the Uniform Lessons have been somewhat improved since 1918, they are wrong in principle and bad in practice. They should be displaced by some kind of a graded curriculum.

Building a Real Curriculum

As soon as a church really conceives its educational task at all adequately, it faces the problem of constructing a curriculum which is based on a study of the progressive needs of growing children and youth, and which can stimulate and develop a natural religious experience from the Cradle Roll to maturity. Just now, in the confusion of experimental courses and the clashing of educational theories, this question of *what to teach* has become our major problem.

Few of the militant conservatives remain on the lesson committee who for years successfully blocked the issuing of graded lessons. A small group, very sincere in their motives, still plead for "only the Uniform Lessons"; but when they pass on, quite probably this ungraded series will no longer be authorized by the International Council of Religious Education. Private agencies among the conservative group will very likely continue to publish them, ably supported by certain vested interests; but official sanction will probably cease.

The so-called Group Lessons, recently inaugurated and broadly graded to meet the needs of each

department of three grades, are destined to have increasing usefulness, especially in schools of less than a hundred pupils, where the closely graded lessons have seldom been popular or really successful even on the cycle plan. The international closely graded lessons, prepared some years ago for twelve grades, with both teachers' and pupils' texts, have been recently revised and are growing in favor. Unfortunately, they are not in the form of real textbooks and are classed by the young folks with the cheap quarterlies because of their pamphlet form. So many independent courses are now available, such as the Abingdon Week-Day Texts, the Scribners' series, the University of Chicago series, and many useful volumes by the Association Press and other publishers that it is possible for a church school to-day to draw widely upon these varied sources and compile its own course of study grade by grade. In fact, with rising standards and new material appearing each year, progressive schools find it advisable to revise their curriculum annually, with constant improvement.

Not Merely a Textbook Proposition

It is becoming more and more evident, however, that textbooks and quarterlies do not constitute a complete curriculum. It is barely possible they will grow to be the minor element in it. A study of the learning process yields many surprises. We may struggle faithfully to teach a class of girls some truth, some element of the Christian faith, some aspect of the Christian life; but how do they really learn it, if they learn it at all? They must

learn it through their own initiative. It is too much to say they can only learn by doing, though extremists are saying this; for it is possible for them to experience it and realize it in imagination as well as through action. But there must be a positive sharing in the experience through some sort of personal expression, else nothing is really learned. And, sad to say, no one really teaches anything unless somebody learns something!

We must therefore, in constructing our curriculum for teaching religion, take into consideration everything that occurs in the church-school session or through its fellowship as well as the actual instruction from the textbooks. The worship program is a most vital part of the curriculum. Even interruptions, tardy arrivals, disorderly behavior, discipline, though not on the program, all have their influence, positive or negative, on conduct-control. The informal sharing in discussion and plans for service, and every personal expression through any sort of activity may prove vital units in the day's curriculum. Nor is this confined to the Sunday session, nor the week-day sessions if any. The graded curriculum will include graded projects. The lesson will sometimes issue in worth-while projects, under either teacher's guidance or pupil initiative; and frequently the project itself will issue in a vital lesson which will thus have a peculiarly personal interest because it originates in life. Our remaining chapters will consider the great variety of vital elements which have been introduced to enrich the modern graded curriculum, all with the understanding that the church school is a religious community, engaged in the vital enterprise of sharing

experience through purposeful activities in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

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XIV

WHY GRADED WORSHIP BY DEPARTMENTS?

After a quarter of a century of struggle, the battle for graded lessons is about won, but the battle for graded worship is only begun. We have been strangely slow in perceiving that every reason for grading instruction and curriculum materials to fit the progressive needs of children and youth is an equally important argument for graded worship. The more we realize that the spiritual aim must be kept supreme in religious education, the more necessary we shall find it to grade our worship programs. Many earnest people are jealously guarding the general assembly as the last citadel of the old-fashioned Sunday school. They are extremely conscientious about it, but their misguided efforts are really defeating their own high spiritual purpose.

What Happens in Ungraded Worship?

The question may well be asked whether the opening exercises in many Sunday schools are really worship at all. They furnish a music-screen for disorder and a camouflage for much tardiness. When they rise above the level of dreary monotony they provide an outlet for enthusiasm which sometimes multiplies noise and confusion more than it

adds to spiritual purpose. The hymns are often carelessly selected on the spur of the moment, and contribute as little to the spiritual value of the service as the equally impromptu prayer. The deacon's prayer, sometimes more theological than religious, and seldom within forty years of a child's consciousness, is just an interruption in the whispering, sometimes not even that. Such a program, instead of providing training in worship, is very effective training in irreverence. It leaves the boy a little less religious than before. The careless, spiritless routine of it reduces worship to a dreary formality, to be gotten through with as soon as the late comers have all finally arrived and the real business of the day can proceed. Cheap revival songbooks, so prevalent in rural schools, have a depraving influence on musical taste, but they do bring a certain vitality and youthfulness into the service which is grateful to the boys and girls as the sole relief from the adult character of the program.

With a sense of superiority we are wont to criticize the Roman Catholic use of a foreign tongue in the ritual of the mass, yet we are treating our children similarly when we conduct their services of worship in an adult, theological language in which they catch only occasional glimmers of meaning and reality. The dead language of the Catholic ritual is partly offset by a wealth of sense appeal, of color and movement, of picture and dramatization, of rich symbolism and mystical appeal which capture the imagination of childlike minds; but all of these are lacking in our traditional Sunday-school worship. It is all kept on the level of adult experience. Hence

it is most unintelligible to children, like the old-time doctrinal catechism or the Nicene Creed.

Shall Children Never Worship With Adults?

Let not this argument be made to prove too much! The writer does not wish to push it to relentless extremes. Though it proves the necessity for worship-training programs on the levels of graded experience, one need not conclude that children should never worship with adults. Perhaps the youngest children should not, but older children can find their share of value in well-planned and varied church services. They are often as intelligent as some simple-minded adults in the congregation and they add a welcome contribution to the singing and the service that freshens the very atmosphere with vitality and optimism. At least the old folks need them occasionally. Successful ministers adapt their messages to the different groups among their hearers and give the children a share of their attention when the number of them present really warrants it.

In the course of the church year the special festival days should call together old and young, and the programs should be such as children can share whole-heartedly. Whatever concession may be necessary should be made by the adults. It will do them no harm to share occasionally in a child-like service. In fact, the appreciation many older people manifest when a children's program is superbly done suggests that ministers are inclined at other times to overshoot even the intelligence levels of maturity. Children and many simple-minded adults cannot understand abstract philosophical

ideas, or the sort of language it takes to describe them. What offends the immaturity of children is the over-intellectual aspect of adult worship. They are quick to appreciate genuine sincerity in the minister, and the emotional phases of worship they can often share in heartily. The hymns and the responses are often real to them. The surest test of the proper age to take a child to a general service of worship is the behavior test. If he is occasionally attentive he is finding some value in the program. If he is tolerably free from restlessness he is not under the strain of reaction against what is foreign to his experience. There is some danger, however, that forcing children to attend church services which have little to interest them may create an aversion to church attendance that they never will outgrow. At all events, it is highly probable that our church attendance problem would have been less serious to-day if we had learned in the past to vary our church ritual to include a larger appeal to children and more participation by them, and if we had also discovered years ago how to train children in graded worship adapted to their growing religious experience.

The Purpose of Church School Worship

Our aimlessness in Sunday-school work is evident most of all in our "opening exercises." If not one superintendent in four could give a clear and adequate statement of their real purpose, the pupils could hardly be expected to do so. Their most obvious aim seems to be to stir up enthusiasm, like the "pep-meeting" the night before a college football game; or to furnish a mildly reli-

gious atmosphere for what might otherwise be chiefly a social function. It is safe to give them the modest name, "opening exercises," for they are often no more than that. If a superintendent is of the very earnest, thoughtful type, he probably aims to make these exercises develop a spirit of true devotion which will help teachers and pupils to find the real message in the lesson for the day. But how often is it realized that the highest purpose of this part of the program is *training in worship* and that this is the unique task of the teacher of religion?

Granted that the teachers need spiritual guidance for their difficult task of making religion real and making the day's lesson vital and intelligible. Granted that the classes need the socializing influence of common worship, the unifying of their purposes, the stirring of their finer feelings, that minds may become open to the truth and wills and hearts be made loyal to the Christ. These immediately necessary results we must plan our worship programs to produce; but their great purpose, after all, is to train our children and youth in the practice of worship, to make prayer, praise, and devotion a natural and enjoyable part of their daily experience and the source of their highest motives for conduct and power for right living. Let the church school teach these supreme values through its training in worship, and if it teaches nothing else it will justify its existence. If it teaches the meaning of prayer, the nearness of God, the joy of united praise, the power of social worship, and the spiritual strength which comes through loyal devotion to Christ, then it is really teaching religion. To

be sure, the test will come in conduct and service. But with ideals and motives developed through worship comes the spiritual strength for life's serious testings.

A Growing Experience of God

All worship is a pretense and a mockery unless it makes God real to the worshiper. The chief reason our opening exercises are so often fruitless is because they fail to meet this test of genuine worship. In our graded worship we try first of all to make God real, and this is far simpler in a homogeneous group. God means so many different things to a mixed group of from six to sixty years that the same prayer language cannot fit everybody's needs. Worship must grow out of experience.

It is too easy to abuse the trusting heart of a child by giving him wrong mental pictures of God. If he misunderstands the language of our adult worship, he may get distorted ideas of God that may hamper him for years. God can mean no more to anyone than his limited experience of life finds room for and his limited intelligence can comprehend. Yet even the little child's thought of God can be very natural and beautiful, when appropriately taught him. "It is comparatively easy and quite natural for a little child to engage in an act of worship," say the authors of *Method in Teaching Religion*. "He is filled with awe, with wonder, with curiosity in the presence of strange, unexplored experiences. He is easily impressed with songs, pictures, stories, and conversation about the heavenly Father, and is constantly seeking for a correlation of his ideas about God, for new experiences

that will help him solve the mysteries with which he is surrounded. Later childhood and youth, though lacking the credulity of early or middle childhood, is characterized by a driving search for truth, for new ideas, for new experiences. Religion for this group must be on a concrete plane. God to them must be made intensely real. For the adolescent, worship must be personal, and effectual in meeting daily needs, in solving life problems. Training in worship during these unfolding years makes possible an intelligent and increasingly satisfying experience of God in the life, and a growing sense of spiritual values."[1]

This illuminating paragraph makes clear to us that if worship is to become a real experience to our church-school children, it can become so only through this growing sense of the reality of God. This can be accomplished with thorough success only through the graded worship-programs of class or departmental groups, of similar age and homogeneous experience and capacity.

Training in a Real Prayer Life

At the heart of this worship-training program is the spiritual purpose of developing the personal prayer life of our boys and girls. The seriousness of our responsibility in this regard occurs to us when we reflect that perhaps the majority of children now have never heard their father or mother pray. Their first impressions of prayer are gained in their Sunday school. Some of them have never heard prayer elsewhere. Are we furnishing them prayer models wholly beyond their experience, or

[1] Betts and Hawthorne, *Method in Teaching Religion*, p. 450.

the sort that appeals to them as intelligible and beautiful? Are we thus making prayer a vital and real experience to them, or something quite remote, weird, and unreal?

The simple prayers of our elementary departments should be recited in unison, usually rhythmical, sometimes sung as little hymns of simple petition and thanksgiving. They should not be abstract, but should include pets, friends, and other realities in their child world. They can be made to stir the children's hearts in the sincerest worship and to develop habits of a beautiful reverence, love, and joyous devotion, out of which will grow a natural, individual prayer life as the years pass. Then, as religion becomes less imitative, in later childhood, and more personal, they should be taught to expand their prayer vocabulary and encouraged to pray individually within the small, friendly group of their church-school class. Some teachers are successful in the technic of teaching the writing of original prayers, comparing, explaining, in a kindly way criticizing, and always encouraging the spontaneous, honest, loving expression of a genuine childlike faith. Though there are both difficulties and dangers in this exercise, it has very real value as spiritual training, under the leadership of a teacher who holds the unlimited confidence and love of her pupils.

Possibilities in the Junior Church

Progressive church schools with the complete modern program find training in worship so very important that they have expanded their Sunday schedule to include a second period for the junior

department at the hour for the regular church service. This junior congregation, as it is often called, in many churches meets with the senior congregation during the first part of their service; and after a brief children's message or story by the pastor, marches out using the congregational hymn as a recessional, to complete their own order of worship in a smaller room.

The growing custom in the larger churches, especially where there is a skillful director of religious education, provides an entirely separate service for the junior church, with a choir of their own, carefully selected and trained, and every detail in the service thoroughly and appropriately planned. Sometimes the primary department joins with the juniors, in which case it limits the possibilities of the service decidedly. The better plan is to add to the juniors the younger intermediates, or possibly the entire junior high department, instead of the primary children, depending on local conditions. Where the family-pew tradition is successfully maintained, it is better for these older children to sit with their parents in the senior service, if the minister really has a message for them.

The value of the junior-church plan is the opportunity it furnishes for bridging the gap, which is often so serious, between the church school and the church. Too frequently the children never really form the habit of church attendance. Ordinary Sunday-school attendance does not accomplish this; but the junior-congregation plan may be made to do so. If successfully conducted, it trains the children in a graded program of worship not too unlike the regular church ritual. It teaches them the customs, meaning, and purposes of their church,

thus training them definitely for church membership, and for active participation in the senior congregation. The program of the junior church under a trained and versatile director and a capable choir leader can be made as great a gain religiously as the junior high school has proved educationally, and for similar reasons. The varied program should include hymns, call to worship, responses, unison prayers, chants, anthems, offertory, Scripture lessons very carefully selected, the use of inspirational poetry in a month-by-month liturgy. Occasional but not continuous use of lantern-slides, picturols and motion-pictures, and simple reverential drama, gives variety to the leader's story-sermon. There is great opportunity here for teaching the religious values in great pictures and great music, as well as in literature. The reasons for stressing the music elements in our training in worship are keenly stated in this paragraph from the chapter on "Teaching the Art of Worship," by Betts and Hawthorne: "Music as an element in the worship service has the power to stir the emotions, to stimulate ideals, attitudes, appreciation, to motivate conduct. Singing has a great socializing value. As children and youth sing together, barriers recede, and thoughts, feelings and purposes tend to become unified, and the worshipers are prepared to act together in a group in the interests of a common good. And for the individual the act of singing breaks down inhibitions, produces a state of high suggestibility, and makes the mind receptive to new truth and prepares it for new lines of action."[2]

[2] *Method in Teaching Religion*, p. 452. Used by permission of The Abingdon Press.

The junior-church plan, then, is growing in popularity because it furnishes an ideal opportunity for graded worship for children just before and after joining the church, and for training them in developing the spirit and practice of religion. It makes religion more attractive to the older children and the church more popular with them, because it fits their needs and allows normal religious expression; just as the junior-high school has made education more effective in grades seven to nine, and consequently has made high school more popular. The junior church successfully bridges the gap between Sunday school and church. It graduates its older children annually from the junior to the senior congregation, after preparing them to participate intelligently in the whole program of worship.

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XV

WHY APPEAL TO IMAGINATION?

The time has passed when it was almost sinful to be interesting. The time has come when it is at least a blunder for a preacher or a teacher to be dull. It is a sheer waste of opportunity; and all waste is sin. The commonest reason for our failures is sheer dullness. If we felt the compulsion which the actor feels, to be interesting every minute, to grip attention and produce results, we should get results by deserving them. Teaching without vividness is dead. It is worse than useless to try to teach children unless you master the technic of appealing to imagination, to make the truth live. The same is true with adults, only in lesser degree as their capacity for abstractions increases.

The Hunger for Vividness

Philosophers may love to think reality in abstract concepts, but ordinary humans, old and young, find reality chiefly in concrete pictures of living truth. Watch any congregation anywhere. As long as the speaker, whatever his subject, talks about principles and theories, most of his hearers listen respectfully, conceal their *ennui* at first politely and patiently, but get more and more bored as the strain continues, until hope suddenly dawns when

he brings an oasis into his abstract Sahara, by saying something concrete. He uses an illustration, tells a story, strikes a vein of humor, employs figurative or picturesque language, makes contacts with a genuinely human experience, or in some other way *comes to life.* Immediately his hearers come to life also. Watch them! Smiles relieve their tired, hopeless faces. They look happy, instead of troubled or just puzzled. In fact, they look ten years younger, as the wrinkles relax into smile rays and they begin really to enjoy the address, because they are sharing with the speaker some human experience and are finding a bit of reality. For most folks, to think is to work, but to feel reality is to live. It recreates the soul. A college chum of the writer's, who stood six-feet-three, objected to his nickname "Lengthy" for the excellent reason that "Lengthy means long without being interesting!" A ten-minute sermon of sheer abstract theory will seem lengthy; but no one calls a vividly concrete sermon long, because all sense of time is lost during involuntary attention. Forced attention long continued is the hardest work in life. The foregoing diagnosis is just as true of "an intelligent college audience" as of any other. The writer has been watching them for twenty years.

A usually skillful story-teller blundered one Sunday, in the midst of his junior-church service, by announcing that he was "now going to preach a sermon, as is the regular custom in the senior church." Audible objection was heard from several children. Mild disorder ensued as many stopped giving attention and wriggled and whispered. The speaker wrestled for several minutes before he

regained his lost grip on the crowd. When they found he was really not preaching, but just telling a story, after all, one after another yielded to his spell, and before he closed fifteen minutes later he had their unanimous attention and delighted interest. Now, few of those children had ever heard sermons. They acquired that aversion from their parents. Why this current prejudice against preaching? Is it not because, in these vivid days of interesting happenings and varied sense-appeals from movies to radios, we are all less tolerant than we used to be of uninteresting, abstract talk? Older or younger, we demand *life*, instead of theoretical abstractions. This is a perfectly reasonable, human demand and it challenges teachers as well as preachers. If we would teach to-day we must learn to be vital and vivid.

Childlike Minds Think in Pictures

We sometimes forget that children simply cannot think abstractly. The writer has tested this out on over five hundred separate boys of different ages, with the question, "What is manliness?" He has never found a boy under fifteen who could give a real definition. Many replied, "Being a man." Some attempted a concrete description. The rest made no attempt at all. Children live wholly in the concrete world of sense perception. They sense life. It is a continuous round of moving pictures of reality. Invisible things must pass through the same process, or they cannot feel that they are real. Hence the wonderful vividness of the child's imagination. Whatever he is really learning he is picturing to himself in his camera within. If he is

unable to form a picture of the person, the event, or the scene they remain unreal to him.

Notice a child as you tell him a story. His face is a study. Tell him about the little brown divers in the harbor of Funchal, who dive for a half-dollar or a quarter and always come up, like Peter's fish, with the coins in their mouths, unless it is too dark a night. See the incredulity first, then admiration, when he sees you are not joking. Then wonder and inquiry. The picture within is forming. Then it halts. He wants more facts. "How do they ever catch up with the coin? How can they see it under water? What makes it sink so slowly? How deep do they have to dive for it?" With every added fact the mental picture grows, until he is satisfied. Then watch him reverse the reel and see it happen all over again with a contented smile. But he has to retouch his picture when you show him a post-card of the man in the rowboat with two boy divers. You explain that it really was not play, but child-labor, slave-labor, and that the boys get nothing if they dive successfully, and a whipping if they don't! The lazy man gets all the winnings. Your boy's face darkens and his fists clinch, as he feels the gross injustice of it. In a flash he sees himself in the place of one of those abused boy divers. You need not explain or preach about the man's selfish cruelty. The story swiftly reached its mark and gained its purpose. How? Simply through the picture-making power of the boy's mind. Imagination made it real.

What Makes Truth Real?

People who have not thought it through are in-

clined to discount imagination and all its works. "If you see it only in imagination," they say, "then it cannot be true; it is only imaginary." They are entirely wrong. Study the learning process of a child and you find you cannot teach him anything until he realizes the truth of it through imagination, or does it for himself. If he cannot try out the thing at once in action, he pictures it in his mind, and this makes it real to him. He finds it true.

For instance, you may talk to him about the beauty of generosity and the grace of giving and the glory of unselfishness, until you are out of breath; but these abstract ideas will teach him nothing. Words ending in *-ity* and *-ness* are in a foreign language to him, the language of abstract concepts. To make it real to him you must translate all this into the child's language of sense-percepts. Just here is the folly of the doctrinal catechism. It was always foolishness to children. They can be forced to learn the words; but they have no living meaning. They are merely formulas. But draw a picture, tell a story, a myth or a legend, and he will comprehend your meaning, as imagination makes the truth real. He will learn it just as quickly and vividly whether the story be truth or fiction. If it is only true to life, it matters not whether it be true to fact. Imagination will give it the values of truth as it helps the child to realize the beautiful and the true. Thus the Santa-Claus myth, generation after generation, continues to feed the minds of imaginative children. It makes concrete and real to them the abstract idea of the beauty of generous giving. And when the myth fades into fiction, with the passing of credu-

lous years, the moral values abide, for the lesson has been learned. Human Santas have been identified who are as lovable as they are generous and worthy of hero-worship.

Far more than we think, truth is made real to adults in similar fashion. We are seldom convinced by cold logic. We are not converted by syllogisms. Abstract formulas are not often persuasive. We glance at the formula, we listen to the logic. Then we say, "Now how does this really work out in life?" We call imagination to our aid, to make the thing real. We picture to ourselves this whole new process of sending by wireless the moving picture of a ball game, which our neighbor says he actually saw last October in Arizona, though the game was being played in New York City. Only in proportion to our capacity to picture it in imagination is the thing a reality to us. So in all things, even for adults, it is imagination which gives *the feel of the real* to truth. Hence the supreme need in all teaching, for older or younger, to make truth vital and vivid. It is the religious appeal to imagination that clinches the teaching.

The Magic in a Story

A good story is a work of art, a vocal picture painted by a human voice. It is the oldest of all the arts and has been working its magic longer than history can say. Its magic is no mystery, for it is simply a cross-section of life. If true to experience, it needs no translation to be understood by the age whose experience it fits. The more dramatic action and vivid incident the story contains, the more picturesque and concrete the language used,

the more effective the story, for action and incident and all the arts of dramatic expression appeal powerfully to imagination. The more the story-teller lives the story as he tells it, the more truly the listeners live the story in imagination with him and thus realize its meaning.

The power of the story lies in its appeal to emotions. A matter-of-fact recital merely starts our thinking, but a real story stirs our feelings. It teaches more than facts, though it does incidentally teach facts. It illuminates and warms them. Its artistry lies in its flashes of insights and values which give life fresh meaning and beauty. Thus the story makes spiritual use of imagination by stirring the religious feelings of reverence, devotion, loyalty, as it causes us to see Jesus actually driving single-handed the grafters from the Temple they had desecrated. We hear his ringing tones saying, "My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye make it a den of robbers." It is the story element in the Gospels, far more than the teaching, which makes the life of our Master so vivid a reality to us that many of us know him so well that it seems as though we had really seen him and heard his voice.

Other Concrete Teaching Methods

The story is carried to greater vividness by dramatizing, and this twofold art makes a doubly powerful appeal to imagination. Of the religious use of this ancient art our next chapter treats. A variety of other methods are successfully employed to-day to make religious truth concrete and vivid. All the best religious art of the centuries is now cheaply available in picture-form, in lantern-slides

and in picturols, the new film slides so compact and satisfactory, reproducing every scene in the Gospels and most of the Bible. This puts at our disposal rich resources, making Bible stories wonderfully vivid, and making the teaching of religion far easier than in any generation past. Motion-pictures are gradually entering the religious field, but they are apt to reveal the producer's meager knowledge of the Bible, and few films of unquestioned merit are yet available. However, this wonderful means of sense appeal must be captured for teaching religion. To possess this agency for visual education and not use it for religion would be as foolish as to use the printing press only for novels, or the piano only for jazz. This new art, like every other, we must employ for religious inspiration and education.

When the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible were rendered into English, the work of translation was only half done. It is still a foreign book to children. It was written by adults for adults. It is all Oriental and ancient, neither modern nor American. Its very scenery is remote and unfamiliar. Much of its language is abstract and philosophical, though happily it contains some of the world's classic stories. But the setting and the folklore and the customs are so Oriental and so different that an air of unreality overcasts the narrative like a sunlit fog when the book is read by children. It must be translated into childlike terms and interpreted to childlike imaginations, and merely changing *words* will not do this, for words, after all, are but symbols. No wonder the Yankee boy worried over Peter asleep on the housetop. All the roofs he had

ever seen in his circumscribed life were pitch-roofs with so dizzy an angle as to make this feat of Peter's either an acrobatic marvel or a genuine miracle!

The Wizardry in Relics and Homemade Models

The construction of models of Oriental houses, temples, furniture, utensils, weapons, articles of dress and adornment not only provides interesting projects for the boys and girls, but these models stimulate the imagination marvelously to help translate the Bible stories into the language of childhood. The writer well remembers the thrill he felt when he saw a rusty old *halberd* in a dentist's office, in the imaginative days of early youth. After reading most of Scott's historical novels of mediæval chivalry, this ancient weapon, the first genuine halberd he had ever seen, symbolized for him the whole enchanted world of knights and troubadours. Even the dentist's instruments were forgotten, under such an anæsthetic, as imagination played vividly about this old relic of heroic days. It conjured up its knightly owner from Valhalla who wielded it full valiantly, on a ghostly, fiery charger the like of which the old Bay State had never seen before! Thus the past can be made to live again under imagination's spell, and the magic wand which produces the imagery may be some simple relic like Doctor Stoddard's halberd, or this little wick-lamp of antique pottery on yonder shelf, dug up not long since in the *Forum Romanorum*, or some homemade model of Peter's house in Capernaum, of rude craftsmanship but glorified by the young builder's dreams.

Is it not evident, then, that the modern teacher

of religion must develop skill in making truth vivid and concrete? We are not living in a humdrum, commonplace age like the simple world of our grandfathers. The enrichment of modern life by music, art, recreation, and miracle-working science has multiplied the joyous appeal to the senses so marvelously that religion must hustle to keep up. We can no longer ride the camels of the magi in a rapid-transit world. We must compete in our religious teaching with the varied sense appeals which vitalize all other education. Imagination is simply "the power of the mind that pictures and makes real." We must face the fact that children think only in pictures and that truth is unreal to all childlike people until imagination makes it real or a project actually puts it into the brain paths. We shall try then to forget our adult dignity, that loves the highbrow language of discussion and theory, and humbly endeavor to follow the Christ in his skilful appeals to imagination through his matchless use of story, imagery, and project. We shall not be likely to succeed in our teaching or preaching until we learn to clothe our messages in the shining garments of vivid, concrete life.

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XVI

WHY DRAMATICS IN THE CHURCH SCHOOL?

DRAMATICS in the church! What would the Puritan or the early Methodist have said to such a proposition? Both would pronounce it an insidious suggestion from the evil one himself. So corrupt was the stage of their day that they could see nothing but moral danger in it. But we remember they took much the same attitude toward all the other arts. Pictures and statuary were to them popish and idolatrous. So they used the deadly whitewash-brush and iconoclast's hammer. Musical instruments too were the devil's own invention, for the wicked composed and sang all the gay music. The same logic explains the Puritan taboo on cards, billiards, and every other form of popular amusement. Because they are abused by gamblers they must be wrong *per se.*

Martin Luther refused to be swayed by such logic and dared to write music and compile a hymn book for Protestant worship. His famous protest was, "The devil must not have all the good tunes!" So he set the art-loving German people to singing "*Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*" and other grand chorals, and the Reformation sang its way into the German soul. Well might he have said, "Let me write the songs of the German people, and I care not who writes their laws." Think of the vast vol-

ume of joyous praise his artistic vision and courage started! Perhaps we owe him as much for breaking the devil's monopoly in music as for breaking the Roman monopoly in worship. It is well for the cause of religion that the Protestant churches have welcomed all the arts at last, even the much-abused drama.

What Drama Has Done for Religion

How tardily and reluctantly we Protestants admit it! Yet all through the centuries the drama has been a most effective handmaid of religion. Only people who prefer to think, rather than to feel or see, have been willing to leave dramatic appeal out of religious services. Because we Protestants have been led by theologians with little artistic vision or appreciation of the beautiful, we have neglected that which is perhaps the chief source of power in Catholic worship. The mass, the whole Roman ritual, is dramatic throughout. We may disparage it as merely an adolescent religion for undeveloped minds incapable of much thinking. Yet the sense appeals, intensified by dramatic action and high pageantry, have gripped the imagination of the masses as the bare simplicity of Puritanism has never done.

We justly praise the Puritan's conscience and his loyalty to truth, but we must admit he took all beauty out of religion except the beauty of holiness. He refused to recognize beauty as an attribute of God, as well as truth and goodness. Thus he was the antithesis of the Greek. Happily our churches of the Puritan heritage are correcting this distortion and are learning to appeal more successfully to

beauty-loving human nature. Only the ethical nobility of the Puritan tradition has kept it alive against such a handicap.

It is worth recalling that for centuries the drama was the chief agency for teaching both doctrines and religious ethics. Sermons were exceedingly few. The intellectual appeal was rather futile when education was so rare. But the common people learned their ethics from the morality plays, their theology from the mystery plays, and the story of Jesus and other biblical heroes from the miracle plays. Ever since the fourth century the festival plays of the Nativity have brought the mystical appeal of the beautiful story of Bethlehem to unnumbered human hearts that would have listened cold and unimpressed to the intellectual discussion or exegesis of the gospel narrative. To be sure, these mediæval attempts to dramatize religion were often crude and sometimes coarse, but this simply reflects mediæval taste. We have only to recall the chastening and exalting impressiveness of the Oberammergau Passion Play, which has inspired the religious life of that Tyrolean village since 1633, to realize the potential spiritual value of religious drama. It can and does effectually spiritualize a community. It is no mere coincidence that all ancient rituals, pagan or Christian, are full of dramatic appeal. Perhaps they could not have survived without it. There is a subtle kinship between religion and the drama, for "the drama is spirit speaking to spirit."

The Recent Revival of Drama in the Church

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in

America now has its standing committee on religious drama. Even the Methodist Episcopal Church, in spite of its tradition against the theater, has its professional director of pageantry. A prominent publishing house issues its annual volume of the leading religious dramas of the previous year. These are indubitable signs of a well-developed movement in progressive American churches. Protestantism has discovered the religious usefulness of the dramatic method. It is a recent revival, barely two decades old, but it is revolutionary in character and significance.

The simple plan of "playing the story," as a method in elementary religious education, probably originated with Mrs. Marie Hobart in an Episcopal church in New York city in 1905, though two handbooks by Mrs. Elizabeth Miller Lobingier first popularized the plan. About the same date there appeared Hall and Wood's little *Biblical Dramas* for young people's use. They were but reprints of Bible language for simple cast-reading without stage-setting or costumes, but they subtly suggested the possibilities of the dramatic appeal. Perhaps the first elaborate use of religious pageantry was the presentation of Oxenham's "Darkness and Dawn," but a few years ago in a missionary convention and demonstration called "the World in Boston."

Since then the movement has rapidly spread. It has shared the growing popularity of the little-theater movement and the notable revival of community pageantry in recent years. The culminating event in the bicentennial celebration of many an ancient town has been the historical pageant, call-

ing back to life outstanding leaders and events in its history. Typical among such celebrations was the great Plymouth Tercentenary pageant, "The Pilgrim Spirit," written by Professor Baker, of Harvard, and presented in 1921 by thirteen hundred local performers. The small Connecticut village of Pomfret has presented its annual Nativity play at Christmas Eve ever since 1912, in which the whole Christian community participates, uniting even such diverse elements as Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Roman Catholics. The great Methodist Centenary a few years ago reached its culmination in the elaborate religious pageant, "The Wayfarer," first presented at Columbus in 1919. Professor H. Augustine Smith, of Boston, a leader of the fine-arts movement in religion, has produced many beautiful religious pageants, such as "The Light of the World" and "The Commonwealth of God," the former presented with great impressiveness at the International Sunday School Convention at Kansas City in 1922 and repeated at many a State convention.

The recent interest shown in religious drama by professional actors is very significant. Charles Rann Kennedy and his talented wife, after playing the ancient morality play, "Everyman," for a number of years, produced a definitely religious drama, "The Chastening," at Easter, 1923. That stupendous production, "The Miracle," soon followed, with its subtle and profound religious appeal, and on so colossal a scale as to require the largest auditoriums for its presentation. But these commercialized dramas have less relation to the movement we are considering than such instances of the religious de-

votion of professional actors as the Hollywood Pilgrimage play, based on the life of Christ and given annually since 1922; and the Greenwich Village miracle play, presented each Christmas Eve at midnight in New York City—both without financial taint and thoroughly worshipful both in spirit and impressiveness, yet apparently quite independent of all church influence or control.

Less spectacular but even more significant is the steady growth during the past decade of the use of the drama in our church schools as a method of teaching religion, and in our young people's societies as a project of service in the inspirational work of the church. Both of these important aspects of the religious revival of the drama call for attention. Here is something of real promise in the modern technic of religious education.

Religious Values in the Dramatic Method

A graduate student recently raised the question, in a seminar in religious education, if it is wise to build such elaborate dramatic equipment as is now installed in our new church plants, with complicated electrical appliances for scenery shifts and lighting effects. "How do we know this revival in the drama may not prove merely a temporary fad? Perhaps the next generation may discard it." The questioner had just had a difficult hour with young dramatizers, half of whom cut the rehearsal to attend a high-school carnival! But when, a few days later, these same young folks on Christmas Sunday acted with fine dignity and appreciation Van Dyke's beautiful classic, *The Other Wise Man*, the questioner's faith was revived. We shall keep

right on equipping our church schools with at least simple stages. This dramatic revival in teaching religion is no mere fad, for there are permanent religious values in the method.

It should be stressed that the chief consideration is the experience of the actors themselves. The religious drama is never a performance, never a mere entertainment. It is a vivid experience through which the young folks in the cast are discovering moral and spiritual realities. The most vivid appeal to imagination is by way of the acted story. To play the part of Joseph at Pharaoh's court is actually to discover how Joseph felt and thought and how he worked out his life problems. To play a part in "The Rock," the prize play of 1924 in *Religious Dramas*, is to discover for yourself the religious experience of Simon Peter, and to know what companionship with Jesus really meant to him. Nothing else will accomplish this quite so vividly and permanently.

Not only does the religious drama appeal powerfully to imagination and make the Bible stories and characters live again and become vividly real, but it furnishes a practical means for testing ideals. Acting the part of Artaban, "the other wise man," gives opportunity to discover spiritual and moral truth in action, to find out whether kindness to a wounded wayfarer, and to a frightened slave-girl, and a Madonna in imminent danger, was really worth more to Artaban's soul than to save his three jewels to give to the king. One who has taken this part has learned once and for all that Christ desires this kind of loyal service most of all, as he taught in his own parable. He has found the secret of Christ's

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me."

The dramatic method teaches concretely the consequences of right and wrong conduct. It gives concrete examples of good living and opportunities to rehearse the right conduct. By rehearsing a variety of actions, our young folks learn many a lesson of life by actually living them; and as they live the part afresh they are stirred by gripping emotions and enthusiasms which give motive power for future conduct. Hence the religious use of the dramatic method furnishes a complete process of religious education, through effective idealization, habituation, and motivation. Miss Helen Willcox is not claiming too much for it when she says, "Dramatic expression helps human beings to grow into a more abundant life, guided according to educational principles, by broadening and deepening their sympathies, and developing imagination, by giving greater poise, balance and freedom of expression to body and mind, and by teaching them to work together harmoniously for a common end."[1] Without disparaging in the slightest the spiritual value of the old-type Christian Endeavor meeting, with its opportunity for devotional expression in testimony and prayer, we are discovering that the reverent use of dramatic expression in religious drama has just as deep possibilities as a means of grace and a molder of spiritual character.

Shall We Dramatize Worship?

The most startling aspect of this recent dramatic

[1] Willcox, Helen L., *Bible Study Through Educational Dramatics.* Used by permission of The Abingdon Press.

development in the churches is its worshipful character. When presented in a thoroughly devout spirit the religious drama produces in both actors and audience the effects of true worship. Many churches are considering the question seriously, Shall we use the drama as an aid to worship? That original English preacher, Maude Royden, claims that the assurance of God comes to most of us through beauty; and she makes the charming appeal, "Come let us worship him in the holiness of beauty." In the midst of any profound movement it is difficult to measure its real significance. Can it be that this revival of dramatic expression in religion is going to bring in a gradual revolution in Protestant worship? Would it give Protestantism a new lease of life, and a broader appeal to the masses, to add to its intellectual and ethical strength this fresh, vivid appeal to the emotions and the seat of spiritual power through the beautiful visualizing of acted truth?

What shall we say of this experiment in a certain Baptist church in New York City. For some time past, according to Miss Martha Candler, in her excellent book on *Drama in Religious Service*, a "drama-sermon" has been presented by the young people every month at the evening service. It has never been done as a mere performance or even with an educational motive, but always in deep reverence. In fact, it is the regular custom for the young people in the cast to hold a half-hour preliminary service by themselves, to pray for humility, consecration, and the power to make their drama-sermon effective in the lives of their audience. Testimony shows that their efforts are

successful. The congregations are often profoundly stirred to genuine worship. The holiness of beauty lifts them into God's presence. The reality of many a Bible message and character has been vividly felt and they go away chastened and determined to serve the Christ. This seems to be the general effect of such experiments in dramatizing worship, whether in liturgical churches or not. The Second Unitarian Church in Boston has for several years presented a thoroughly worshipful Nativity pageant at Christmas time that has become a tradition of deep spiritual power in their church life.

It is undoubtedly true that not every Protestant church has the talent or the leadership to dramatize worship successfully and impressively. There is grave danger of failure to reach the heights, resulting in a sad drop to the commonplace, if not the ridiculous. It may be a new generation will need to be trained, quietly, gradually, in these new forms of expression before they will become general and thoroughly natural. But the progressive leaders of children and youth are finding herein a wonderful means of developing spiritual and social power in growing lives, as well as projects of service in and through the church.

In not a few churches, like the Congregational Church in Lakewood and several in Cleveland and Toledo, the young people's society finds each winter a welcome opportunity to master and present at least one of the strong new dramas with religious motive and message, first in their own church, and then by invitation in ten or twelve vicinity churches. The service is always rendered in the spirit of gen-

uine devotion, never for entertainment, and leaves almost invariably a deep religious impression; while for the members of the cast themselves it means a cumulative spiritual experience, increasing through the winter. The dramatic method of teaching religion has come to stay, and even in the realm of worship it has startling possibilities of increasing usefulness.

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XVII

WHY PROJECT TEACHING OF RELIGION?

It is better to learn life than facts about life. Learning is not just the acquisition of new ideas. That is the commonest educational fallacy. The old-fashioned grammar has dropped out of the public school curriculum because so many boys who "learned the rules by heart" kept right on murdering their mother tongue. Their hearts had not learned it after all. It was only the periphery of their brains. Now the teacher teaches written and spoken English instead of grammar; and the pupils learn English by speaking and writing it, while grammatical rules about it are learned incidentally. Pupils really learn only by experience. They may share another's experience through vivid imagination; but they learn most surely by doing the thing themselves.

Hence the socialized recitation and the project method have entered the modern school and have revolutionized education—though even the word "recitation" has become taboo in some quarters, for it may suggest the return to the teacher of unassimilated knowledge. The old dull process of learning uninteresting ideas remotely related to life has given way to actual experience in practical living in the midst of the school-enterprise. Whether the class be arithmetic, English, geography, or science, there is a constant contact with life that

maintains a real interest because the pupils sense that something real, not merely formal, is going on. They are constantly meeting real-life situations and solving practical problems, as tests of actual living.

Are We Teaching Religion or Teaching About It?

In very recent years religious education has learned that these same principles apply to the teaching of religion. In fact, the project principle is probably our greatest acquisition from the field of general education. Unfortunately, only the more progressive church schools, with trained teachers, have yet seriously undertaken to adopt it. In many a community the boys and girls attend a twentieth-century public school and a nineteenth-century Sunday school; and no wonder their Sunday-school teacher finds it "so difficult to teach the Bible." The trouble is her pupils are only learning *about* religion, or hearing talk about it, on Sunday; while in public school on Monday they are actually learning life's activities and solving real problems.

Sad to say, people never become religious by just listening! We Protestants have a naïve faith in the spoken word. This is part of our overemphasis on the sermon. We must reluctantly admit that words and ideas are psychologically weak in the forming of character. Pupils may glibly recite what is only an echo that has never scarred the brain-paths. It is action that counts. At least it counts one in the forming of habit. As Shaver says, "To short-cut the Christian educational process by limiting it to learning *about* Christianity is almost wasted energy. The hope that the verse once

learned will guarantee action later is psychologically untrue."[1] Then he quotes Dewey's searching statement, "There is nothing in the nature of ideas *about* morality, of information *about* honesty or purity or kindliness which automatically transmutes such ideas into good character or good conduct."[2]

This explains how superficial the old orthodox aim was, to secure belief in a creed as the highest goal of Christian effort. Suppose our attentive pupil or convert accepts our creed—just what have we actually accomplished? Have we taught him religion? No, so far we have only taught him about religion. We hope his belief in the creed will save him. But save him from what, and how? Has it given him the attitudes and habits of right living which make his character self-controlled and efficient to meet social and moral emergencies? That boy is not saved, that is, he is not safe, until we school him in the Christian ways of living, in habits of Christian conduct. This will greatly help him to understand and to believe, and his belief will strengthen his loyalty and his Christian conduct; but the "faith without works is dead."

We must guide him in solving his personal problems. If he merely accepts our solutions they remain for him unsolved. We must practice him in meeting situations requiring self-control, quick moral decisions and the use of real spiritual insight and judgment, in the testing of Christian ideals. We cannot do these things *for* him. It would still leave him an untried soul. To be sure, this reason-

[1] Shaver, E. L., *The Project Principle in Religious Education.* Reprinted by permission of the University of Chicago Press, publishers.

[2] Dewey, J., *Moral Principles in Education.*

ing brings dismay to many a Sunday-school teacher whose childlike hope made her task very simple. If only *telling* children how to be good would accomplish that purpose, how fine it would be! But human life is not made that way. Our process of teaching religion is not simply getting religious ideas into the mind; it involves getting religious habits, attitudes, ideals, and loyalties actually into the brain paths. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"? Yes, *if you act on that belief*. Only the action can prove the belief sincere and make it effective.

A New Name For An Old Art

Yet project-teaching was not really invented in the twentieth century. It is new in educational theory but old in occasional practice. Skillful teachers for generations have known that the learning process is not mere receptivity, but activity. They have realized the need of action to put education through, and have cleverly devised ways to secure the expression necessary to clinch the teaching. Enthusiastic teachers who shared their best with their students have been able to arouse an unusual interest which carried the pupil beyond the formal tasks of memorizing facts, over into the field of actual experiment. For years we have been stressing expressional activities as a necessary part of the learning process, and though such activities when merely tacked on as an appendix to the lesson may have little vital relation to it, they do have educational value when related to it just because they are activities and because they offer the pupil the means of expressing the purpose aroused by the

lesson. To the extent that teachers in the past have stirred their pupils to purposeful activity, they have led them to find in practical experience through their own initiative much of the value of the project method, by relating their learning to their living.

The laboratory method in all the sciences, the case method in teaching law and practical theology, and the clinic in medical school have also been akin to the project method under older and less mysterious names; for the project is simply "a problematical act carried to completion in its natural setting." Education at its best has long taken to some extent the project viewpoint toward its task and opportunity. The chief element of newness is the discovery that the project is not a mere preliminary or appendix to the learning-process, or just a pretty application, but the heart of the process itself, the unit of vital experience which registers the lesson in life.

Analysis and Description

Hosic and Chase show clearly that there are three rather distinct things involved in the project method as a term used in modern education: "It is a way of living, living by your own wits and in co-operation with others. It is a way of learning—almost *the* way of learning, certainly so far as self-directed activity is concerned. And it is a way of teaching, of conducting the educative process, shaping the educational environment."[3] All three of these things are really involved simultaneously when the

[3] Hosic and Chase, *Brief Guide to the Project-Method.* Reprinted by permission of the World Book Company, publishers.

project principle is skillfully demonstrated, for, as the same authors say, "The project method is a name for what happens when an individual or a group sets about accomplishing a purpose, and in carrying it out, brings about changes in his (or their) knowledges, skills, habits, or attitudes. . . . It provides opportunity for children to engage in living, in satisfying, worth-while enterprises—worth-while for them; it means guiding and assisting them to participate in these enterprises so that they may reap to the full the possible benefits."[4] Another writer, speaking of the whole-hearted, purposeful activity which the project provides, says "the child is lured on to complete his task by the sense of its worthwhileness." Yet when lacking adult guidance, children often do not complete their own projects. They lose the interest which depends on this sense of worth-whileness, and leave countless projects unfinished, thus losing their educational value and the sense of satisfaction which only completion can give.

Various Types of Projects

This discussion of the activity of the learning process shows us that spraying the passive boy with ideas is really not education at all. Genuine teaching and learning are inseparable and involve the mutual, simultaneous activity of both teacher and pupil. The mind is not a reservoir. Like the rest of the body, it develops through exercise. The units of experience which make up the learning process must be real life situations. They may be

[4] *Ibid.*

of several types, for we do our living in the three realms of action, thought, and feeling, though these often merge; and our experience leads to knowledge, power, attitude, and skill. The more complete projects involve all these functions and results in different proportions.

There are projects which are chiefly intellectual in purpose and process, and such units of experience are usually called problems. There are other life topics through which skillful teachers lead us into new emotional experiences. These are called appreciation units and deal mainly with feelings and values. The life topics for teaching in which the aims and processes of learning are chiefly manual or volitional are sometimes called pure projects, yet they involve the project principle no more truly than these other types of the learner's active experience.

It is convenient to classify projects in terms of the results obtained. We find first the problem-solving project which yields new *knowledge;* secondly, the constructive type of activity which develops *habit;* thirdly, the appreciation type, usually æsthetic in nature, which develops an emotional *attitude;* and lastly, the achievement type which results in increased *skill.* All projects find their origin and incentive in some problem. It is the unknown element in the experience that arouses curiosity and challenges investigation, thus starting the experiment and the learning process.

Religious education uses every variety of project. Teaching religion involves many a problem in working through doubt to vital faith, but the real solution even in such mental projects is in active serv-

ice, through which doubt often disappears. Religious projects are frequently appreciation units. To exchange letters with a Japanese girl in a mission school in Yokohama and discover how human she is; to get well acquainted with an Italian boy and find why he hates the name "Dago"; to climb a mountain and see a wonderful sunrise; to watch a glorious sunset on the ocean; to study the life of Christ in pictures; to dramatize a story and really feel the character you impersonate—all these are appreciation projects in religious experience that broaden life and deepen the soul.

Miss Edland describes how even a young child can experience the emotional values of playing a story: "A tiny primary girl was playing the part of an Armenian child who was hungry and cold and had no father and no mother. Her sympathy for the child was intense. One day, just before the class was going to play, the director discovered her sitting on a box. A tragic expression was on her face. 'What is the trouble, Alice?' asked the director. Alice looked up and said with a sigh, 'I feel so sorry for *me*.'"[5]

Appreciation projects are often of the very noblest sort and lift the soul through sympathy to altruism and self-sacrifice and, through beauty, to God. Projects of this type are highly necessary to furnish the motivation for Christian character, especially when related to the stirring of the pupil's loyalty to Christ, which gives the strongest motive power to Christian idealism. All such projects, however, though originating perhaps in the realm

[5] Edland, Elisabeth, *Principles and Technic in Religious Dramatics*. Used by permission of The Abingdon Press.

of the feelings, find their truest expression ultimately in action, in some form of Christian service.

Some Limitations of the Project Method

It is clear, then, that all these varied enterprises, whether discussion problems, appreciation units to develop feeling or sympathy through experience, or manual projects of varied activity, to fix habits or develop power or skill or new knowledge or mental attitude, are all units of experience involving doing the thing, not merely hearing the teacher preach about it. It is a radically different method than most church-school teachers usually employ. To use the project method requires considerable elasticity and adaptability on the part of the teacher. He must learn to be versatile, to shift his post in the game quickly as emergency requires, to play both the educational "pinch-hitter" and "utility-fielder" when and wherever needed to carry the project through to completion; but never to outstar the other players who are learning the game for themselves. Pupil initiative should not be hindered except when it is getting them nowhere.

Enthusiasm for the project principle should not, however, lead us to think that this method is always useful. Not everything can be taught through projects. And the older and more experienced the class, the less necessary is this concrete, active method. Though the project may have the future, "Nothing but projects" is an unwise slogan for the religious teacher. Controlling group experience is real teaching, but there is such a thing as fruitful knowledge which a wise teacher can share with a

class without setting up active projects, provided the law of apperception is observed. Pupils should have intellectual experiences through making fresh discoveries with intellectual enthusiasm; and this can sometimes be the direct result of purposeful, spirited teaching which makes vivid appeal to imagination in place of the project method.

There is real danger of lack of intellectual content when projects are constantly used. There is always difficulty in using the projects with large groups. The larger the group the less perfectly the project fits the needs of all. The scattering of group interest sometimes follows, likewise the failure to organize the results of the project and assimilate what is learned. And untrained pupil initiative is often poor leadership, particularly in problem discussions where earnest seekers after truth often get beyond their depth and flounder pitiably, sometimes without knowing it! Such discussions need adequate teacher control, without which they soon degenerate into fighting windmills, and even if they keep their temper, they get no real results. They have had their discussion, but it was not education; it was just mental confusion. Ignorance cannot educate. Yet the project method, with its great variety of possibilities, is bringing fresh vitality into many church schools and is developing slowly a new and effective type of lesson-courses, such as Mrs. Wadham's *Project-Lessons in the Gospel of Mark*, Weston's *Jesus and the Problems of Life*, and Sailer's *What Jesus Christ Expects of Modern Young People*. The new curriculum now slowly building, under Doctor Bower's direction, in the International Council of Religious Education,

may be expected to demonstrate effectively the project principle in teaching religion.

Making the Lesson Objective and Purposive

All appropriate use of the manual arts and methods may be made a project experience. We no longer use the sand-table and the clay-modeling for mere busy work to occupy restless fingers while we tell our stories to young children. Such materials, with pulp and plasticine and all sorts of models, are used to make the story itself objective and real to the children. They share in the building and live the story as they build. Drawing, coloring, cutting, folding, poster-making, picturebook-compiling, woodworking, toy-whittling—all these can be employed by thinking fingers to weave the values of the story into the heart and life.

In the junior grades projects can be used to make the Holy Land real, to bring it down to earth from its vague location in the clouds among the Bethlehem angels. For instance, if the boys draw two maps to the same scale, on transparent paper, one of Palestine, the other of their local county, and place one upon the other, a very definite sense of size and relative distances can be quickly gained. An illuminating project is a trip to Palestine, planned as if the class were really going. Have them secure illustrated booklet and prospectus from rival cruises for next winter. Let them compare the ships, study the itineraries, the railway schedules, the clothing and equipment needed, the varying climate at the different stopping places, the kinds of money used, the distance to Haifa, port of

Jerusalem, the railroads and auto roads in the Holy Land, and all details of a two-weeks' tour of the Master's own country. With the help of Hanson's *A Travel Book for Juniors* and an ample supply of pictures and stereographs, such a project can be made vital and interesting, and it will put the land of the Bible in the child's real world forever after.

Suggestions for manual and social projects of a wide variety and with real educational value may be found in such handbooks as the Christian Citizenship program published by the Association Press, and the manuals of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp-Fire Girls, and the Girl Reserves, the last being under the patronage of the Young Women's Christian Association. All of these suggest graded projects fitted to the experience of growing boys and girls, for their development physically, mentally, socially, and along special lines of camp-craft, wood-craft, home-craft and a variety of handicraft. Such concrete suggestions stimulate ambition, reveal latent talent, develop skill, deepen purpose, consecration, and the spirit of service. There is some danger here of losing the full benefit of the project method through too much adult supervision, and it should always be remembered that the most natural projects are the spontaneous outgrowth of group experience, and these real situations and emergencies in the group life should often be allowed to interrupt any and all formal programs of study.

The Master Teacher's Skill With Projects

It is wonderful how Jesus anticipated our most

modern aims and methods of religious education. He stressed the social emphasis and used the project method repeatedly. As Shaver says so suggestively:

"Instead of setting up a formal school with classrooms, regular meeting hours, and note-taking material, and then lecturing, drilling, and holding examinations, Jesus went on with his task of building the Kingdom. He chose twelve associates in the great enterprise. As they went about with him they saw him do whatever love prompted. At first their part was small. They passed the bread and fish, they cared for the physical details. But they 'observed' the way Jesus worked. Then they were sent out to try 'two-by-two.' Finally he gave to them the entire responsibility of carrying on the work which he laid down. Their lessons, their ideas, were gained in connection with real, first-hand experiences into which they were led because they were his associates. He talked to them, of course. But it was always about reality, about life; in most cases it had to do with an experience through which they were passing. No formal definitions or logically arranged system of ethics was left to be memorized. He suggested a prayer when they asked for it. It was not words which he wanted them to learn; it was, rather, a way of life. He planned that they should get the complete experience. . . . How much we could learn about character-development methods if we studied the simple but effective means used by the 'Word who became flesh and dwelt among us'! It was what he did day after day that taught the disciples. The words he used were spoken to

clarify and enlarge upon the experience they were having."[6]

It is evident that Jesus taught most effectively by securing purposeful activity on the part of his disciples. He set folks to work and they quickly learned by doing. "Put out into the deep, and let down your net." "Show me a penny . . . ." "Give me to drink . . . ." "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor . . . ." "Go forth into Galilee . . . Go . . . Preach . . . Heal . . . ." "Feed my sheep . . . ." And to the blind man whose eyes he anointed with clay, he said, "Go wash in the pool of Siloam." And we are told, "He went away, and washed, *and came seeing*." It is thus our pupils' projects open their eyes to truth, to the beautiful meanings and values of life, to right living, social duties and religious loyalties. They try out their ideals by projects, and "come back seeing." We use projects in order that our pupils may really comprehend what we are trying to teach them; that they may see for themselves, as they live the lesson, the beautiful rightness of the Jesus Way. It is our chief means of really injecting *purpose* into the teaching of religion. It makes all real learning purposive as all true living should be.

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XVIII

WHY WORLD FRIENDSHIP AND SERVICE PROGRAMS?

In our discussion of purpose and aims, in the first part of the book, we decided that the work of religious education is not completed by spiritualizing the local community. From the viewpoint of Jesus' ideals we must not only make ourselves and our community Christian; we must also spiritualize our patriotism, and broaden it into world vision and world-friendliness. We must now face this responsibility of religious education to teach constructively this broader sympathy through its teaching and service program.

What Is the Cruising Radius of Your Heart?

The sailing range of airplanes is limited by their "cruising radius." The same is true of submarines. It depends upon their power and fuel capacity. The cruising radius of Christian sympathy and friendship varies quite similarly, and for analogous reasons. It depends on what you carry in your heart, the length of your vision and the outreach of your love. There are home-circle Christians whose vision and feeling of responsibility goes no further. There are some Methodist Christians whose Christian interest stops right there with their own denomination. There are some Congregational Christians, still narrower, whose religious interest is limited to

the local church. There are American Christians who are one hundred per cent Americans and believe in letting the heathen find heaven their own way. And then, thank God, there are millions of *World Christians*, whose neighborliness, like the Good Samaritan's, knows no bounds of race or distance, and whose vision of responsibility is a world vision of service. Of these five types, which Christian really follows Christ?

The strength of our purpose in teaching religion meets no severer test than this. In fact its cruising radius is the truest measure of its strength. What's the range of your Christian sympathy? Naturally, your feeling is stronger for those who are nearest; but how far will your heart reach at all? Is the Pacific too wide for your cruising radius? Are Japan and China hopelessly beyond the fixed horizon which bounds your heart's vision? Does your heart find the barriers of race, language, and color too much for its faith and love? Or do you agree with Jesus Christ and Robert Burns that "A man's a man for a' that"? Jesus made little progress teaching this world-friendship principle to first-century Jews; but he is succeeding vastly better with present-day Americans. With which group do you class yourself?

"Make Disciples of All Nations"

This farewell challenge of Christ to his followers gave the Christian world the great commission to teach all races the gospel of the Kingdom. From that day to our day this has been the great work of his church, though it has often shirked it. The church has been at its best when it has followed

the Christ into all the world to help needy humanity. The Roman Church proved its zeal most clearly in its Jesuit missions, involving high loyalty and great sacrifices. The unselfish, sacrificial spirit of Protestantism has been demonstrated chiefly in our world-wide program of evangelization and service. Granted that for centuries the missionary motive was "to compass sea and land to make one proselyte," and for another century the chief motive to save the heathen from a future hell. More recently the broader social program of Christian service was adopted, beginning with medical missions and schools, to follow the Christ in meeting all human needs in neglected fields and to bring the blessings of Christian civilization. Perhaps our altruism has been a bit too patronizing and our attitude a little too superior. We do well now to approach more modestly even less favored peoples, on the level of our common humanity and in the spirit of mutual self-respect. The modern missionary is more tactful and considerate of age-long traditions than some of his predecessors, hence more successful in gaining confidence, co-operation and genuine friendship. After all, the work of missions is supremely the work of world-friendship, and this term is fast coming into favor as expressing the fundamental motive of the great movement.

An Educational Movement Primarily

Under whatever name or from whatever motive the program of Christian missions has been promoted, it has always been in principle educational. Christ's original commission was a command to teach. The teaching has often been chiefly homi-

letical and formal, yielding meager educational results; but long ago it was discovered that even in the interests of evangelism a thorough system of schools was necessary, and now Christian education is the standard program of most missions.

A similar revision of purpose and method has been going on at the home base, in the home churches. Formerly the requisite amount of missionary giving was secured by spasmodic, irregular, and high-pressure methods. Pastors, visiting missionaries, and secretaries made occasional inspirational addresses, informational, to be sure, but with strong emotional appeal. Immediate results were secured in the form of cash, but meager permanent results in intelligent and steady loyalty to the missionary cause, except among the elect few in each local church. But in recent years systematic missionary education has been promoted by all denominations, through attractive literature fresh every year, and effective plans for group-training of both children and adults. The expansion in the world-service program of all great churches in the past decade has not been merely due to the greatly improved administration, nor to our increased prosperity, but quite as much to the steady campaign of education which has made the average Christian more intelligent about the romance of missions, and the real work accomplished by individual missionaries on the field. Fewer people among us now share the notion of the nineteenth-century innocent who thought of China as a nation of some three hundred million celestials with pig-tails, who supported themselves by taking in each other's washing. There is still too much lack of missionary

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interest in our churches, especially among busy men; but it is a provincialism due to ignorance rather than sheer selfishness, and education quickly remedies it.

Adult Education in World Friendship

The current popularity of the isolation theory in politics is a strong reaction from the wartime idealism, and is partly due to the partisan opposition to the League of Nations. Yet many men and women of intelligence are genuinely interested in world affairs and the fate of the struggling nations. Many churches have kept alive this world vision and international interest by forum discussions and mission-study groups as well as sermons with broad outlook and world-sympathy. Happily the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America has been keenly alive to its opportunity to stimulate this international spirit of good will and has served the cause effectively through wide circulation of literature, many public addresses by its secretaries, and many significant conferences. Five years ago, at its national convention in Chicago, it voiced the noblest idealism of the churches in this most vital issue by giving expression to this challenging

Statement of International Ideals

1. We believe that nations no less than iudividuals are subject to God's immutable moral laws.

2. We believe that nations achieve true welfare, greatness, and honor only through just dealing and unselfish service.

3. We believe that nations that regard themselves as Christian have special international obligations.

4. We believe that the spirit of Christian brotherliness can remove every unjust barrier of trade, color, creed, and race.

5. We believe that Christian patriotism demands the practice of good will between nations.

6. We believe that international policies should secure equal justice for all races.

7. We believe that all nations should associate themselves permanently for world peace and good will.

8. We believe in international law, and in the universal use of international courts of justice and boards of arbitration.

9. We believe in a sweeping reduction of armaments by all nations.

10. We believe in a warless world, and dedicate ourselves to its achievement.

No one can doubt that the above statement of Christian ideals is but the extension of the Golden Rule of Christ into the international realm. Such a declaration is a splendid offer of world-friendship to all other peoples, and voices unofficially the real heart of intelligent, Christian America. It is an ideal which our government is gradually approaching, and for the most part is already maintaining. Nothing could more powerfully affect the realization of these ideals of international peace and brotherhood than the teaching of world friendship in the churches of the land, for the development of an international mind in this country, as well as to arouse intelligent support for our foreign missionary program.

The Making of a Missionary Person

When Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive, he must have had in mind

the reaction upon the giver when a generous deed is done. Liberal giving liberates the heart of the giver, expands his soul, broadens his interests, and he finds new joy and beauty in living. Thus he who receives gets a *material* gift; but the giver wins a *spiritual* gift. This teaching of Jesus would assure us that when a church becomes a generous missionary church, through its giving program, it gets more help than it gives, for it is blessed through its giving. Thus it comes about that an important byproduct of our missionary program in the local church, and a direct result of all missionary education, is the making of a missionary *person*, that is, people with world vision, with an international mind, with a sympathy with a long "cruising radius," with a feeling of true brotherliness toward all races and peoples, who give intelligently and gladly as well as systematically to support the well-planned extension program of their church at home and abroad. Such Christians have more than the missionary spirit; they have the missionary *habit*, and thus live the missionary spirit in all practically effective ways. They are the backbone of every church and the ultimate support of missions everywhere. Usually also they are the spiritual force in the local church; for the truest steam-gauge of any church is its fluctuating gifts to missions.

A Graded Program of World Friendship

It is just because we need such "missionary *persons*," not as the exception but as the rule in all our churches, that religious education has added to its program graded instruction and training in

world-friendship. As Lobingier says, "This ideal of world-friendship has to do with knowledge, and with mental attitudes, and with activities and habits of life. It is therefore a matter of education, and as such it is a problem for the school of the church. The cause of world-friendship must not be left to chance, nor delegated to a zealous minority in the church, nor must it become the victim of high-pressure methods. The church must give thoughtful and intelligent consideration to the task of determining how the spirit and practice of universal Christian friendliness may be included in its program. It must have a definite method by which it can train its children and young people in this direction."[1]

Why, then, a world-friendship program in the church school? Because we must admit that the missionary movement is fundamentally educational; because world-friendship is the heart of it and this, like all good will, must be taught and practiced; because our fluctuating support of missions must be stabilized and not depend longer on spasmodic emotional appeals; because a wider knowledge and more general intelligence will increase the enthusiastic supporters of the missions movement; and because world-friendship is an integral part of the religious education of every Christian for the good of his own Christian character; but supremely because it is the will of Christ expressed in his great commission.

If training in world-friendship is made an in-

[1] Lobingier, J. L., *World-Friendship Through the Church School.* Reprinted by permission of The University of Chicago Press, publishers.

tegral part of a church's educational program, it should be taught regularly, not spasmodically, and should be made effective training, not simply instruction. The information element will not be lacking, but it will be taught partly through projects and will be sustained by habits of personal service and of intelligent giving, in all of which personal initiative on the part of each pupil will be encouraged, so that his gift and his service will really express, and thereby increase, his personal interest. It should go without saying that this entire program should be graded to the needs and capacity of each department in the church school, otherwise it will fail to be truly educational. Ungraded world-friendship work has all the weakness of ungraded worship or instruction. The natural interests of each group will guide them in their choice of projects which they will undertake as class service, and enterprises to which they will contribute for the coming month as a department. Unless they undertake this voluntarily they do not really share in the work with any special interest or intelligence. They should at least be consulted in the plans, or they will feel, and justly, that the matter has been put over on them by adults, and this will greatly diminish their interest or destroy it altogether.

The Project Method in World-Friendship Training

Another important principle is mentioned by Kelly: "Missionary education should issue in some practical form, involving the enlistment of oneself and substance in the cause of the extension of

Christ's kingdom. It is vitally important that the sympathy aroused and the emotions stirred by mission study find a legitimate outlet in genuine service rather than running off into mere maudlin sentimentality or disappearing altogether through the atrophy which follows inactivity."[2]

The special-project plan recently promoted by our great mission boards is thoroughly educational, as it ties up individuals and local churches to definite missionary enterprises and increases personal contacts. In fact, the project method of teaching finds one of its finest opportunities in this field of world-friendship work, from the kindergarten grades up to adult classes, as Lobingier shows clearly in his little handbook on *World-Friendship Projects in the Church School.* Many of these graded projects were worked out effectively in the United Church school in Oberlin, Ohio. A more extensive list of graded projects is also suggested in Loveland's *Training World Christians.* Both books include a variety of social-service projects in the local community as well as the more distant kind, and very wisely, for children need the training in the friendly service which is nearest, to develop not only the habit of kindly usefulness, but of discovering their own opportunities for service. This combining in a single service program all varieties of service for Christ's sake has the same psychological effect that the united church budget has: It suggests, and effectively teaches, that the Christian enterprise is a splendid unity, both world-wide and local, but

[2] Kelly, J. B., *Missionary Education in the Church School.* Reprinted by permission of the author. Published by Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

indivisible. Until a young person really catches this vision and actually practices its high Christian ideal, he is not thoroughly educated religiously. The training of world Christians is no longer an elective in our progressive church schools.

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XIX

WHY WEEK-DAY CHURCH SCHOOLS?

Two types of people say it is unnecessary for the church schools to teach religion on week days. One group says that what little religion is needed can be taught Sundays, for the main thing is to teach morals, and the public schools can do that adequately without any help from the church. The other group says the Bible belongs in the American schools and must be put there; then the church will not need to teach religion except in the Sunday schools. Both of these opinions need to be looked into.

Why Not Religion in Public Schools?

For two centuries such public schools as we had in America taught religion as an important part of the curriculum. The Bible and even the doctrinal catechism of the church were used as textbooks, and usually without any protest, except perhaps from unwilling children! In fact, in that part of the country where the common schools enrolled most of the children, namely, in New England, Sunday schools came in more slowly because they were less needed. The children were learning religion then in the day schools.

But a century ago this custom began to be changed. The tax-supported schools had to be

secularized, freed from church control, because of the just protest of taxpayers who objected to having their children taught some one else's religion. The first amendment to the United States Constitution guaranteed separation of church and state, hence they demanded that public education be freed from religious bias in communities with mixed population. Shall we try to reverse this custom and teach Protestant Christianity in the public schools as our grandfathers did? Perhaps in some communities we might force this change of policy by majority vote. Then such cities as Dubuque and Boston with Roman Catholic voters in the majority would enforce the teaching of Catholicism in their schools, even though most of the pupils are Protestants. We would soon face an intolerable situation.

No, if we hope for a united country, free from religious tyranny, we shall not incur this risk. Nor, if we believe in the Golden Rule, shall we permit Protestant teachers to teach religion to Catholic and Jewish children in tax-supported schools; for we would not submit to the indignity of having our own children taught the Hebrew or the Catholic faith in schools that our taxes support. Simple fair play will keep religion out of our public schools even as an elective course. And even in homogeneous communities where all are Protestants, it is questionable policy to teach religion in the schools; for such instances might in the future be cited as arguments for obtaining a share of public tax funds for Catholic parochial schools. Of course, it is a serious thing to teach in the schools every important subject *except* religion. It seems to

make religion an unimportant elective in the school of life. To offset this, the public school authorities should officially recognize the importance of religion in our civilization by co-operating with the week-day church schools in the matter of the daily schedule.

Sunday-School Teaching Insufficient

In a previous chapter we discussed the point that the Sunday school is attempting the impossible and must expand its time schedule or confess its failure. The task of training our children in religion and morals is too great a task to be accomplished in an hour a week, even if we were reaching all the children every Sunday. The half we are teaching we reach barely half the time, and we may well wonder what proportion of them actually learn what our untrained teachers try to teach them. To be sure, a fair percentage of its members the Sunday school delivers to the church as communicants, by the time they reach middle youth; though there is a large leakage of those who drop out of the church school without ever joining the church. And when we consider the broader responsibility of training them in right habits of living, in meeting their obligations in all social relationships, in developing reliability, honesty, truth-telling, self-control, purity, fair play, and loyalty to their noblest ideals, only they who know best the Sunday school's inevitable limitations can understand how impossible it is for it to meet this huge challenge successfully. With the help of Christian homes, we are inspiring our children and youth with noble Christian ideals and high motives of loyalty to Christ and home and

country, and this spiritual motivation reaches far; but the limited range of projects by which we test their faithfulness in emergencies leaves them too frequently at the mercy of insidious temptation. Our technic is too meager, our habit-building is inadequate, for our Sunday-school time is all too limited.

Character-Training in Public Schools

With a time opportunity more than twenty-five times that of the Sunday school each week, the day school should accomplish something in the training of character. Under favorable conditions there are great moral values in public-school education, at least for the training of good citizens. The National Council of Education has thus set the goal: "The development of a key virtue of individual strength of character expressed in good citizenship, including independence, force of character, self-respect, self-control, justice, generosity, cheerfulness, pleasantness, and self-sacrifice; a personal sense of responsibility and habitual exercise of responsibility for the enforcement of all law as well as the performance of democratic essentials not required by law."[1]

By precept and example and skillfully planned projects the public-school teacher can train her pupils in these virtues of a Christian democracy, in the interest of high citizenship, and we shall all rejoice in whatever success is attained. We need

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[1] Quoted in Hauser, *Latent Religious Resources in Public School Education*. Reprinted by permission of the author. Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the United States.

and must have whatever help the public schools can give us on this great problem, for they have the finest chance with American children.

Christian people welcomed this sensible and friendly resolution of the National Council of Education, adopted unanimously in 1921:

"In view of the dependence of democracy upon religion . . . it is the duty of all churches, irrespective of differences of creed, to unite in an effort to make religious education more universal and efficient, to emphasize democratic elements in religious instruction, and to correlate religious instruction with all elements in public-school education helpful to religion. It is the duty of public-school authorities to emphasize all nonreligious elements in instruction which tend to make religious education more intelligent and efficient, and to organize some systematic form of moral instruction in every public school. And it is the duty of churches and public schools alike to make earnest efforts to insure a more general reverence for divinity and respect for all things religious, including respect for churches other than one's own and for everything connected with their forms of worship."

On the other hand, the International Council of Religious Education, the following year, adopted resolutions on this subject, quite in detail, in which they heartily endorsed the above resolution of the public-school men, and went so far as to recommend—

"To arouse the public to provide systematic and effective moral instruction in all public schools in the form of education for democracy. This recommendation is made in the firm belief that no pro-

gram of moral instruction possible for the public schools is in itself an adequate means of moral training; but the moral habits, backed by the practice and the nonreligious motives contributed by the public school, may serve as a basis for a more spiritual and religiously motivated moral instruction given in church schools."

Let us gratefully recognize that public-school teachers are helping to train our children in moral living. Many of them are making Christian ideals concrete and powerful through their own example. Many of them not only guide the children in right conduct, but vitalize that conduct through stirring noble sympathies and loyalties. They skillfully teach literature, history, and biography to interpret life and duty and to reveal challenging ideals. Such teachers make racial and national traditions appeal powerfully to youthful imagination and conscience. They arouse loyalty to great causes and reverence for great souls, and all this powerfully affects the growing character. When doing its best, the public school is a great ally of the church. If religious education includes character education, then our public schools are among the community allies for religious education.

What Public Schools Cannot Do

We have seen that religion as such should not, and usually cannot, be taught in American tax-supported schools. They also have their serious limitations in character education. We dare not make them our chief dependence for developing the Christian character of our children. Public-school ethics are all too likely to prove prudential

ethics—doing right merely because it pays. The chief trouble is that they are strong in habituation but weak in motivation, strong in standardization but weak in spiritual ideals. And now that a naturalistic humanism is threatening to dominate our educational system, religious leaders are dubious about the future. Dean Athearn vigorously asserts:

"Should the public school base its ethical instruction on the naturalistic and materialistic theories of reality, the church would find in the public school an agency of agnosticism directly hostile to the spiritual ideals of the Christian religion. Those who identify religion and democracy, and define religion as the recognition of and the pursuit of social values are prone to overemphasize the contribution which the public schools can make to direct ethical instruction. From this group of leaders comes a movement which asks that the church retire from the business of education and turn the whole task over to the 'socialized' schools maintained by the state.

"The materialistic trend of secular education in recent years, already reflected in the content of public-school textbooks, calls for a definite and vigorous action on the part of Protestant citizens. The time has come to show that the public school unaided cannot guarantee the moral integrity of the American people."[2]

Among recent "Character Education Methods" probably the best is *The Iowa Plan* which won the $20,000 award in 1922. It clearly outlines the

[2] Athearn, *Protestantism's Contribution to Character-Building in a Democracy*. Boston University Bulletin, December 4, 1926. Reprinted by permission of author.

process of ethical training, but was doubtless forced by the conditions of the contest to leave out God and religion. Yet they felt obliged to list reverence as the climax of their "fundamental principles." The paragraph under that heading is thus rather lamely concluded: "Love of noble personalities is not unlike devotion to the Spirit of Life. The person is morally safe who has reverence within his inner parts." And there they leave you, with their climax incomplete. Without venturing even to name God as the object of reverence, their climax turns to bathos. Their proposed plan for training in moral character has much to commend it, but, lacking the motive power of religious ideals and loyalties, it suggests machinery without steam. It is interesting to discover that in the final chapter they felt obliged to include an appreciative reference to the moral and spiritual influence of the church, as if they felt that, after all, the completion of this great task of developing noble character is impossible without the help of religion.

Public-school ethics is too apt to standardize conduct by prevailing social standards rather than to lift it by religious ideals; to teach adjustment to social environment rather than the courageous challenge of it with the nonconformist conscience. Lacking the power of religious sanctions, can state education really create right attitudes toward evil? Can it discover and stimulate the noblest ideals, develop genuinely religious habits of life, furnish the highest motives for conduct, inspire truly unselfish service, and develop the supreme loyalties which result in spiritual living?

Because of its inevitable limitations, the public

school fails to carry moral and religious education through at every point mentioned above. And even were it otherwise possible, the personal limitations of thousands of inexperienced school-teachers, perhaps still in their teens, would defeat the process of moral education. It is no reflection on the splendid influence of the mature and earnest half of our public-school teaching force to remind the reader that the graduates of our State normal schools average barely three years of service as teachers for the State! In those three brief years many of them give to their work an enthusiasm and devotion which ennobles the characters of the children they love; but think of the superficial, flighty thousands of young teachers who are no more capable of teaching morals and religion than of explaining relativity or sidereal mathematics!

The Church Must Supplement the School

The Roman Catholic discovers these facts and displaces the public schools by a parallel system of parochial schools from kindergarten to university. We must honor his motives. He dreads the influence of schools he calls godless because they cannot teach religion, so to safeguard his children he tries to put their entire educational process under church control, with teachers consecrated for life to their vocation.

He has a perfect right to do this, but the system is un-American, undemocratic, and potentially dangerous. The children of a democracy need to be given the advantage of common elements in education so that they can share the traditions, ideals, and loyalties which have made us a great nation;

otherwise they are not quite American. Parochial schools are a divisive factor, threatening our national future. At all hazards, and in spite of their obvious defects, the public schools must be maintained. Let the Christian patriot supplement them, but not displace them. We must supplement the public schools by providing in our churches, in at least one Protestant church in the community, the week-day teaching of religion. This is doubly necessary, because of the insufficient religious training in the Sunday schools and the inadequate moral training in the public schools.

Hence the remarkable spread, in the past decade, of various types of week-day church schools. Among the earliest were the daily vacation schools, and usually the most effective, because they have continuous influence over the child for weeks at a time. Evening training schools for older young people, on either local-church or community basis, have become quite general. More recently three types of week-day religious education of children have supplemented their public-school training. Some are interdenominational community schools, some are promoted by a single church, and others by all the local churches of a given denomination. Serious difficulties have been encountered, but in many places this week-day teaching of religion has been so successfully demonstrated it has won permanent support.

It Deserves Public School Co-operation

This new movement has not progressed without organized opposition. Small groups of atheists, notably in New York State, have demanded and

sometimes secured injunctions against the official co-operation of school boards, even in allowing pupils to be dismissed for an hour in week-day church schools. These injunctions cannot stand. Our court precedent and school custom are both strong the other way. The public-school authorities do not encroach upon the constitutional provision for the freedom of church and state when they merely "facilitate the teaching of religion" by sharing public school time with week-day church schools. Their practice in accepting the product of Catholic parochial schools makes it obligatory for them to recognize the academic value of Protestant week-day schools, when maintained at an equally high level with public-school work. Public high-school authorities cannot consistently refuse credit for Bible courses of high grade in week-day schools in Protestant churches so long as they accept the work of Catholic parochial schools.

But whether or not academic credit is allowed for such work, where public-school officials refuse to dismiss pupils at convenient hours within the limits of the normal school day, to enable them to attend the religious day school at least an hour twice a week, it puts a serious handicap on the teaching of religion. It is unfair to the church school and unfair to the children to allow them only the hours of recreation, at the end of the day, when the fatigue curve is too high for real study. The church has a right to some of the best hours in the school week for this most important teaching of the fine art of living.

Many schoolmen are frank to recognize this claim as legitimate and reasonable. They usually co-

operate gladly with progressive churches that are ready to adopt and promote this modern program, and will even grant academic credit for Bible study in junior and senior high-school grades, provided all the standard teaching requirements are fully satisfied. Last year the State superintendent of public instruction in Indiana was so interested in this movement that he called together, at his own initiative, a significant conference of public school men and religious educators, to discuss this whole problem of mutual responsibility and possible co-operation. The finest spirit of cordiality and mutual respect prevailed and a plan was formulated in detail which soon became the new State law providing for week-day religious instruction for public-school credit when the necessary standards are maintained. The near future will probably see this division of responsibility worked out still more thoroughly, and the functions of each agency mutually agreed upon, possibly along the lines of Hauser's suggestion:

"The church must demand of the public school such teaching of morality as will result in conduct-control; the state must demand of the church that teaching of religious faith and practice, fundamental for civilization and democracy, which the churches deny to the state; also the strengthening of morality through the religious control of conduct and the emphasis of every element in religion which specifically furthers the essentials of democracy."[3]

[3] Hauser, *Latent Religious Resources in Public School Education.* Reprinted by permission of the author. Publication and Sunday School Board of the Reformed Church in the U. S.

Special Advantages of Week-Day Religious Teaching

The question is sometimes raised whether we have reason to expect of these week-day church schools any greater efficiency than the Sunday schools. It is an interesting fact that this usually proves true. Some public-school leaders in the city of Dayton, Ohio, where over fourteen thousand children are receiving instruction in Protestant week-day church schools, say that they find this religious teaching surprisingly efficient, though they consider the Sunday schools of little educational value. It is quite possible they do not really know the local Sunday schools well enough to judge them fairly; but at least their opinion is supported by the fact that more than half the children studying the Bible in these week-day church schools are not enrolled in any Sunday school.

Where the system really gets a foothold, explain it as you will, is in the fact that the religious day schools draw in many children that the Sunday schools cannot reach. When the work is done within the limits of the public-school time schedule, even though the class meets in a church, the school atmosphere, discipline, spirit of work, and educational standards prevail, and the teacher is able to accomplish twice as much as within the given time at the Sunday session in the same room. The tradition that Sunday is neither a work day nor a study day is hard to overcome. On a week day we escape this handicap, and religion can really be taught as naturally as any other subject in the curriculum. Incidentally, the percentage of attendance at the week-day school is noticeably

higher than on Sunday, in fact, just as high as at public school, for as Squires says, "Going to school is the regular week-day business of children." It is partly due to the greater sustained interest of the children in the work the week-day church school is doing. They manifest an enthusiasm which is rarely seen in Sunday schools. The single factor of increased time with the children makes possible a greater variety of expressional activities, handwork, maps, and worth-while notebooks, posters, dramatization and service projects, and the practice of the socialized recitation on the same lines as the neighboring public school from which the pupils come. It gives a rare chance to co-ordinate the whole educational process of the children's entire day, at home, school, church, and on the playground and secure the introduction of religious motives of control into their entire behavior.

The real reason, then, for week-day church schools is their greater efficiency. Under favorable conditions, two week-day hours added to the single hour on Sunday quadruples the church's influence with children. Squires is not claiming too much when he says: "It will make the religious truths taught an integral part of the child's religious life. It will put Protestant religious education on a par with that of the Jews and Roman Catholics. It will give the Protestant child a chance to become religious."[4] And as the week-day teaching of religion in church schools demonstrates its efficiency, public school officials are usually frank to recognize

[4] Squires, *The Week-Day Church School.* Reprinted by permission of the author. Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.

the fact. As fast as the churches can thus supplement the public-school courses in ethics, the teachers of ethics in the schools should acknowledge their limitations and refer their students to religion and the schools of religion, for the spiritual motivation of their moral and social ideals. To secure this effective correlation of our educational and religious-educational forces should be the earnest purpose of both during the next decade.

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XX

WHY TEACH AS THE MASTER TAUGHT?

Should anyone in these days suggest that we should teach as Gamaliel taught, or even like Socrates, he would be laughed out of school. Both these ancient worthies made great contributions to educational history, especially the latter, but neither is a model for teachers to-day. Why should we hark back to the first century for a demonstration of skillful teaching? Does it seem reasonable? It is not strange that the early centuries have much to teach us, but their contribution is largely cultural content, not method; chiefly facts, not skills. In nearly everything the human race has grown increasingly skillful through cumulative social experience; and this has been peculiarly true in the field of educational method. There are a few lost arts, but the art of teaching is not one of them.

Yet the astonishing thing about Jesus as the Master Teacher is the fact that his teaching is authoritative still both in content and method. He taught with the skill of an educational genius, as well as with the inspiration of a peerless spiritual seer. We revere him for what he taught and what he was, but the teachers of the modern world should also stand in reverence before him as the supremely skillful teacher of all time.

Jesus Christ the Master Teacher

This book has been concerned with the philos-

ophy of teaching method, especially the purposive teaching of religion. It would be sadly incomplete without a culminating chapter on the technic so skillfully used by the world's greatest teacher of religion. It is clear that Jesus was not content with teaching *about* religion. All the scribes of his day were doing that. Had he done merely that we might never have heard his name. He might have lived and died as Jesus ben Joseph, village carpenter and scribe without professional training. No, Jesus actually taught religion. He did not just talk about it. He demonstrated the vitality of his own religious experience and with infinite subtlety succeeded in sharing this experience with a few disciples.

Although thousands of books have been written about Jesus, doubtless more than about any other person, none has been written about his pedagogy, except three or four in the present generation. This singular fact is probably due to the exaltation of his divinity and a reluctance to compare him with ordinary teachers, and perhaps a feeling that merely human teachers could never acquire his teaching skill any more than doctors could learn to raise the dead.

Granted that it was an educational miracle to teach religion to Simon Peter, that does not argue that we may not well study how Jesus accomplished it. Granted that he was Son of God and Saviour, we still must recall his own preference for the simpler titles, Son of man and Teacher. Horne, in his interesting book on this subject, suggests, "Some may still feel that Jesus as a teacher should be only heard, not studied. But what if studying his

methods unstopped our ears, opened our eyes, increased our skill—nay, even developed our reverence?"[1]

Many things united to make him the Master Teacher. Even his casual hearers knew that he taught "as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matt. 7. 29). It was the authority of a kingly personality, uniquely divine, supremely human. It was the authority of a teacher of religion whose experience of God was original and intimate, and whose comprehension of human nature was equally remarkable and intuitive. "He himself knew what was in man" (John 2. 25). His teaching was great also because he had a great message to teach the world, a message of redemption and social salvation, projected by unflinching faith in the coming of the kingdom of God's good will for which he taught his followers to pray. Again, his mastery is marked by his broad vision of the teacher's task and opportunity. The scribes of the day were content with mere instruction. To instruction he added training, supervising, demonstrating, developing, life-sharing; and in the whole process he revealed a surpassing command of the technic of teaching, even when judged by modern educational standards.

His Skillful Approaches and Human Contacts

As a teacher Jesus was shockingly unprofessional! He was as unconventional in his method as he was in his preparation. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John 7. 15) was their

[1] Horne, H. H., *Jesus the Master-Teacher*. Reprinted by permission of Association Press.

amazed but skeptical inquiry. It suggests that he was innocent of professional training. This spared him the fate of becoming conventionalized. To be sure, he taught on occasion in the synagogues until the scribes blacklisted him as a rank outsider, but it never seemed to occur to him to open a school of his own, to found an educational institution, or to use the current methods of formal teaching. He preferred to teach people when they had no suspicion they were being taught! He was conversational, not didactic, seldom dogmatic, and never oratorical, except in his philippic against the Pharisees (Matt. 23).

He made educational situations out of highly unpromising settings. A drab woman of Samaria, following the dull monotony of drudgery, comes wearily to the old well she had laboriously drawn water from all her life and finds him sitting quietly there alone. He was an utter stranger, a foreigner by race and religion. They had apparently nothing in common. Every sort of social prejudice separated them. She was a woman of no ideals or inspirations and no evident interest in religion. Yet in a very few sentences he gained her confidence, overcame her suspicious prejudices, aroused her interest, proved his sympathy, amazed her by his penetration, discovered her thirsty soul, aroused her conscience, and brought her to repentance. His method of approach, asking for a favor, was even more skillful than it seems. His gracious manner and kindly voice established friendly relations at once by defying the Jewish tradition which forbade a rabbi to speak to a Samaritan woman or allow her to approach him. His adroit use of the figure,

"living water," made quick transition from the concrete to the spiritual, and soon the woman's heart was open to his teaching and he won both her and her neighbors to his better way of living.

Notice his swift, deft approaches to the two publicans of Capernaum and Jericho. Just a friendly invitation to Levi to join his circle of disciples in the one case, and a request to Zacchæus to be a dinner-guest in the other. Here again the skill lies in the implied disregard of social prejudice and the gracious offer of a rare friendship. Notice too his frequent use of native interest as the key to teaching. To farmers he taught of the soil, the seed, the grain, the tares, the harvest, the vineyard. To fishermen he made his approach by some apt reference to their trade. "Put out into the deep and let down your nets. . . . From henceforth thou shalt catch men" (Luke 5. 4, 10).

Surprisingly Modern in Teaching Technic

Jesus seemed to realize that interest is the key to teaching and the secret of attention. His clear intuitions and fine sympathies led him to appreciate unerringly what people were interested in. Then he instinctively opened the conversation on these topics, to prepare the way for the truth he wished to teach. Apparently, the parable, his most characteristic form of teaching, was always used for this purpose, adapted to the occasion.

He seemed to know the essential unity of the mind and the power of a unified, harmonious personality. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. . . . No man can serve two masters. . . . Ye cannot serve God and

mammon. . . . Be not therefore anxious"—that is, not distracted but unified (Matt. 6. 22–).

He seemed to feel the importance of securing expression, and the character-making power of the *act.* "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7. 21). One of his most tragic utterances is the regretful query, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6. 46.) He aimed at the will his strongest appeals; that is, he aimed to secure action, to carry his teachings over into life.

Though he could never have heard the technical term, he came very close to stating the law of apperception when he repeatedly said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." That is, we understand only what we have ears for, what our previous knowledge can interpret. Though he studied the problem of approach through personal interest, he well knew also the importance of *effort* in character-making, and was an advocate of the strenuous life. "Whosoever would be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me"[2] (Matt. 16. 24). "Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life" (Matt. 7. 14).

He was modern in his use of suggestion in indirect teaching. At a time when the faltering faith of his disciples needed moral support he gave them this quiet reminder of the resources at his command, "Do ye not . . . remember the five loaves . . . and how many baskets ye took up?" (Matt.

[2] American Revised Version: "If any man would come after me, . . . let him take up his cross and follow me."

16. 9.) He seemed to sense the bad psychology in negative suggestion and usually made his teachings positive rather than negative. The Ten Commandments of Moses are mostly negative, but the nine Beatitudes of Jesus are all positive. The golden rule of Confucius is negative, but Jesus' Golden Rule is positive. The old Hebrew law commanded, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy," but Jesus challenged the rightness of it and said, "but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5. 44–45). The positive and constructive purpose of his life and teachings he concisely states in Matt. 5. 17, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."

His Appreciation of Childhood

We may justly claim that Jesus was the first great teacher to discover the young child; that is, he first realized the strategic plasticity of the child mind, the teachableness of children. It was a great day in the history of education when the Man of Galilee defied tradition and ran the risk of ridicule by taking a small child and setting him in the midst of his wondering disciples. They had been quarreling over the question of which of them should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven! To rebuke their selfish ambitions and teach them proper humility, Jesus revealed to them his exalted idea of childlikeness as the key to the kingdom. Children he found teachable and humble enough to learn. It was a sharp rebuke when he solemnly told his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in

no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18. 3).

Yet they were very slow to learn this lesson, for he had to repeat it not many days later. It was when they were discouraging some people who had brought their young children to meet the Great Teacher and receive his blessing. The disciples were driving them away when the Master interceded for the children with these tender words of singular insight, "Suffer the little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for to such belongeth the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19. 14). He has earned the distinction of being called *The Friend of Little Children*. The world has no greater title of nobility. It was not simply that he found them lovable, that he welcomed their visits and praised their humility to his friends, but because he found them teachable and realized that he could never successfully teach any but childlike minds, that is, plastic minds.

His Vivid Appeal to Imagination

Jesus was modern also in perceiving the significance of the picturing power of the mind. Like his contemporaries and predecessors, what we call imagination he called the heart.[3] The ancient proverb,

> "Keep thy heart with all diligence,
> For out of it are the issues of life,"

we should put in modern English thus: "Guard your imagination with all caution, for out of it

[3] Luke 1. 51 speaks of "the imagination of their hearts." Also Psa. 141. 2.

come the consequences of life." Jesus felt keenly the strategic importance of imagination in character-making. He recognized it as the source of both good and evil conduct, the "blue-print" from which future behavior and character are produced. He puts it very concretely in Mark 7. 21–23: "From within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." And he is doubtless again referring to the picturing power of the mind fully as much as memory when he says, "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6. 45).

It is clear that he felt religious teachers, to make their work morally effective, must appeal to this citadel within. So he did his best to make his teaching vivid and concrete. One reason the multitudes listened to him so gladly was because he was far more interesting than the scribes. He employed beautiful imagery and all the figures of speech, striking metaphors and similes, keen irony, challenging hyperbole, suggestive allegory, as well as ingenious parables.

He avoided abstract language and would quickly turn a theoretical debate, started by some captious critic, into a practical discussion of conduct. How cleverly he avoided an academic discussion of politics and the ethics of Roman taxation by his swift demand, "Show me a denarius" (Luke 20. 24)! In

an equally skillful way he illustrated his conversation with Nicodemus about the deepest spiritual realities. His simile of *the wind* is a vivid one and helps to explain an abstract conception which was puzzling even an LL.D. Likewise he introduced his teaching about the "water of life" by the concrete request for a drink of water from the well.

His Skillful Use of Stories

His use of the story was most artistic and effective. He was an artist in polishing a story into a literary gem for teaching purposes, making it carry his message without a useless word. The lawyer's abstract question about neighborliness Jesus promptly met with a matchless story, vividly presenting a cross-section of real life, the parable of the good Samaritan. The lawyer doubtless preferred to discuss it wholly in the abstract. It is always less exacting and more comfortable to discuss one's duty abstractly; but it is a sheer waste of time; such detachment from life gets nowhere. Jesus got down to business at once with the man and came to close grips with his conscience by citing the concrete instance. For all we know it may have been a real occurrence and the questioner may have been the hard-hearted Levite himself. At all events the story is a marvel and has taught the world true neighborliness ever since.

Stanley Hall cleverly calls Jesus' parables "Binet-tests of spiritual insight," and says they serve as "moron-finders!"[4] Jesus surely had a subtle way of using a parable so as to veil its message from the

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Hall, G. Stanley, *Jesus the Christ in the Light of Psychology.*

unreceptive and reveal it to the receptive mind; for he felt the full force of Isaiah's meaning,

"By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;
And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:
For this people's heart is waxed gross,
And their ears are dull of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed" (Matt. 13. 14–15).

Other teachers of his day were speaking in parables, but they lacked the finished beauty and conciseness, the spiritual insight and purpose, the swift appeal to conscience that Jesus' parables possess. With what swift, definite strokes he paints the picture of the Pharisee and the publican in the Temple! Where can we find a more vivid portrayal of true and false religion in so few words? It has mirrored countless Pharisees and heartened countless publicans. And what marvelous insight into human nature is revealed in the story of the prodigal son! That is as wonderful a characteristic of this great story as its revelation of the heart of the Father-God. For both reasons the world could not spare this classic picture of religion in action. Further illustration is unnecessary. It is quite evident that Jesus was one of the world's masters of the art of teaching by story-telling. We do well to search persistently between the lines of the gospel narratives for the secret of his subtle artistry.

His Effective Dramatizing

It startles us for a moment to think of Jesus as

a dramatizer! We do not like to think of his playing a part. Never for a moment, surely, was he a dissembler, a pretender. No one, of course, would imply that. But we do discover that he repeatedly found it useful, even necessary, to attain his teaching purpose by the dramatic method. Here, again, he seems quite modern. When even a story was not vivid enough for his purpose he went to the limit in making his message concrete by *acting* a parable.

For example, he had repeatedly tried to teach his friends that love should never be too proud to serve; but they had failed to learn this important part of his religion. The universal prejudice against menial labor was too strong in their minds. So they came to their farewell supper with Jesus still feeling that any service of this sort is degrading. As the Carpenter of Nazareth he had glorified manual labor forever, but they were blind to it. Again and again he had taught them that his place in the world was to serve others, not to be ministered unto; but they failed to realize what it all meant. So with the purpose of a determined teacher, he dramatized his teaching in a very convincing way. With a self-effacement that sacrificed none of his inbred dignity, he demonstrated, as mere words could not do, the true dignity of labor and the privilege of serving those we love:

"During supper Jesus, though he knew that the Father had put all things into his hands, rose up from table, stripped to his shirt, and tied a towel round his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to dry them with the towel that was tied around him.

When he came to Simon Peter, the latter objected, saying, Master, are *you* going to wash my feet? . . . So after he had washed their feet, he put on his clothing again, resumed his place at table and asked them: Do you understand what I have done? You call me Teacher and Master, and rightly, for so I am. If I then, your Master and Teacher, have done this menial service for you, you ought also to help and serve each other."[5]

Whatever one's interpretation of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, it is an effective dramatizing of Jesus' teaching about the Bread of Life. We may accept this aspect of it and still believe that his primary purpose was to feed the hungry. One of the strangest scenes in the Gospels is the triumphal entry on Palm Sunday. Possibly Jesus' purpose in yielding for the time being to the enthusiasm of the crowd was to dramatize his messiahship. Surely his taking the little children into his arms and talking with them and about them, as a lesson to his disciples, was a bit of dramatizing that must have been impressive, likewise his striking rôle as a fiery reformer on the day he drove the grafters from the Temple—though in both cases he was intensely sincere, which only deepened the dramatic impressiveness of his language and behavior.

His Use of the Problem-Project Method

Thus in a variety of ways we find Jesus anticipating our modern ideals of teaching. It will not surprise us that he also used the problem-project

[5] John 13. 1—translation from Fiske, G. W., *Jesus' Ideals of Living.*

method many centuries before the technical term was invented. He would have appreciated Herbert Spencer's keen observation: "Children should be *told* as little as possible. They should be led to discover as much as possible for themselves." Only as a wiser teacher than Spencer, Jesus would very likely have asked, "Why limit this to children?" We find that he seldom taught dogmatically or deductively. He used much the inductive method and encouraged men to think for themselves. It was characteristic of him to preface his teaching by the query, "Now what do *you* think about this?" "But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said . . . " (Matt. 21. 28). "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them . . . " (Luke 15. 3). "And he said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest *thou?*" (Luke 10. 26.) "What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they exact tribute?" (Matt. 17. 25.) "But who say ye that I am?" (Matt. 16. 15.) This all shows us how fond he was of stating problems for his disciples to think through for themselves. He well knew that they were more certain to understand them and to remember their own solutions, than to remember direct teaching which required no strenuous thinking. It was far better for them to learn to think for themselves and form their own judgments.

He comes close to stating the project principle of teaching when he says, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7. 17). Present moral conduct leads to future moral insight. That is, we learn *by doing*. He believed

this so thoroughly that he often assigned projects to his disciples, not only to furnish training to develop their leadership, but also to clarify their understanding of his teaching. He made the project a means of educating as well as a medium of service.

To the blind man whose eyes he had anointed with clay he said, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam. . . . He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing" (John 9. 7). If that rich young ruler, to whom Jesus suggested the challenging project to rid himself of the wealth which was strangling his ideals, and turning his heart to gold, and to give the proceeds to the needy, had dared to carry out the project, it would have opened his eyes, like the blind man's, to see the joy of giving and the gratitude of the poor for human kindness. Project teaching always opens eyes; that's the purpose of it. Exactly this experience rewarded the disciples when Jesus sent them, two by two, into the homes of Galilee to learn by the project method. He taught his theological students by the "case system." He saw that they needed to discover the problems of Christian leadership for themselves and to try their own initiative in solving them; so he said to them, "Go . . . preach . . . heal . . . serve," and with detailed instructions (Matt. 10) he sent them forth, as into a social-service laboratory. They worked through their projects faithfully, and came back to him with seeing eyes and reinforced purpose because of the practical lessons this experience had taught them.

"Arise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5. 8), "Give me to drink" (John 4. 7), "Show me a de-

narius" (Luke 20. 24), all were projects which led to revealing experiences. So did the project assigned to the fishermen in Luke 5. 4, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets." And when he came to bid his fickle friend Peter good-by, and gave him those final tender instructions, he suggested the same method: "Simon, do you love me? . . . Feed my sheep. . . . Feed my lambs" (John 21. 15). It is significant that in his vivid and searching descriptions of the final judgment, Jesus makes the acid test action and service. "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things . . . " (Matt. 25. 23). "Come, ye blessed of my Father, . . . for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat. . . . I was sick, and ye visited me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, *even* these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. 25. 34–40). Thus Jesus taught to secure action and emphasize service. We find this clear emphasis in his vivid little parable of the doer and the dodger, at the climax of the Sermon on the Mount, which in a way sums up the entire message of those three great chapters, "Everyone therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock" (Matt. 7. 24–25).

As we gather together these evidences of the surprising modernness of Jesus' teaching method, we cannot help wishing that through the many centuries of educational experimenting the students

of Jesus had known more of education, and the leaders of the educational movement had known more of the Master Teacher. A careful study of his methods of teaching long ago might have hastened the progress of teaching method and might have produced more effective teachers in generations past, certainly in religious education. And our teachers to-day, well trained as so many of them are, with all their modern equipment in educational psychology, child study, and the principles and technic of teaching, may well go back to the Christ of Galilee, who long antedated Froebel, Pestalozzi, Rousseau, and Herbart and who never heard of pedagogy, project, or psychology, yet who was the peer of the wisest teachers and in some mysterious manner found his way unerringly to the wisest methods of teaching, and therefore to the minds and hearts of men. It is a first-century miracle, beyond our explanation, but the inspiration of this Master Teacher is no more clearly evident in what he taught than in the way he taught it. Why teach as Jesus taught so long ago? Because we cannot find a wiser or more skillful teacher. All teachers should come to the feet of the Nazarene in admiration and sincere devotion. No wonder we are told in the artless, straightforward language of the Gospels, "And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

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